

PLUCK AND LUCK

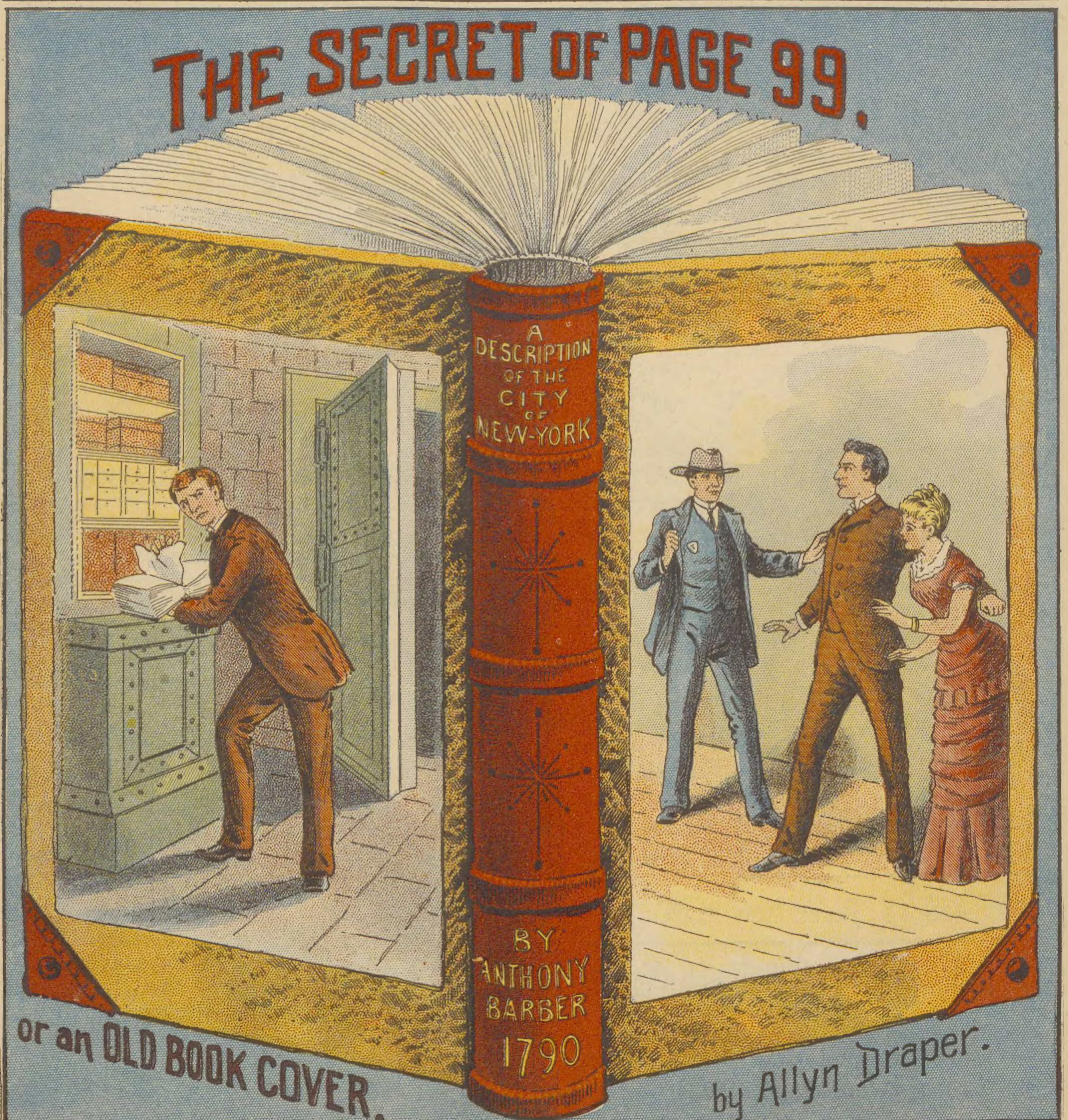
COMPLETE
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Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Frank Tousey.

No. 122.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 3, 1900.

Price 5 Cents.



A tall, elderly man entered. "I want Carter Green," he sternly said, putting his hand on Fred's arm, and at the same time exhibiting a detective's badge. Fred boldly said: "I am Carter Green; what is your business with me?"

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NEW YORK, October 3, 1900.

Price 5 Cents.

The Secret of Page 99

OR,

AN OLD BOOK COVER.

BY ALLYN DRAPER.

CHAPTER I.

THE APPOINTED TIME.

"Mr. Bullard, can I be spared for an hour or so? I have an important matter of my own to attend to this afternoon."

Mr. Asa Bullard, senior partner in the great "notion" house of Bullard & Lum, looked over the top of his spectacles at young Fred Maynard, his clerk, and scowled.

"I prefer that the young men in my employ should have no private matters," he said. "If there ain't work about the store to keep you busy, I can find plenty for you to do."

It was a mean answer, coming from a mean man.

Not for months previous had Fred Maynard asked for a moment's excuse from his work.

Mr. Bullard knew this.

Hence the meanness.

Yet nothing could be more respectful than the young man's reply.

"I am sorry to insist, sir, but this is a matter of deep importance to me—a family affair—one that concerns my whole future, and cannot be put off."

Mr. Bullard scowled again.

He was amazed that one of his clerks should have the audacity to persist when once he had been refused.

"What is the nature of this important matter, Mr. Maynard?" he asked, stiffly.

"That I cannot very well tell you, sir—it entirely concerns myself."

"Is it of more importance than my business?"

Fred did not answer.

"Oh, go, if you must," said the merchant, crossly. "But I want you and all the rest of the clerks to distinctly understand that this perpetual running in and out of the store during business hours is a thing that has got to be stopped."

Thereupon the senior partner of the great firm of Bullard & Lum bent over his writing, while Fred Maynard hastily passed into the street.

"Crusty old coot," he muttered, smarting under Mr. Bullard's harsh words. "I only wish I could quit his employ forever; had it not been for Bessie's sake I would have done so long ago. If fortune favors me, as I hope it may to-day, on Saturday night I'll draw the last money I shall ever take from Bullard & Lum."

It was evident—perfectly evident—that the young man had something of more than usual importance on his mind.

As he pushed his light straw hat back upon his head and hurried down Broadway on that burning August afternoon, the countenance of Fred Maynard bore a look of anxious expectation.

And that he should be anxiously expectant need excite no wonder.

We, who propose to follow his rapid steps, will soon see that he had abundant cause.

Down Broadway to Wall street, along Wall street, on the right-hand side, until the old and time-honored banking house of Endicott & Co. was reached.

Here he entered.

"Hello, Fred," whispered one of the clerks, as he passed with-

out speaking directly toward the banker's private room. "Wish you luck, old boy."

Fred Maynard, in response to this salutation, merely smiled and nodded.

His face was flushed from repressed excitement as he knocked at the office door.

The knock was answered by a boy.

"Mr. McCrillis," said Fred. "I have an appointment with him at three o'clock."

The boy threw the door wide open.

"Mr. McCrillis is waiting for you," he answered. "Please walk in."

Fred Maynard stepped into the office.

It was a large room, comfortably furnished in the style of the olden times.

On either side of a round table two men were seated.

Both were old and gray-headed, and respectable in appearance to the last degree.

Upon perceiving the young man's entrance, the shorter of the pair rose and pressed him warmly by the hand.

"My boy," he said, in a fatherly tone, "allow me to congratulate you. The long looked for day has come at last. Mr. Endicott, allow me to introduce Frederick Maynard, the beneficiary under my late client's singular will."

The other gentleman, at the table now also arose and shook Fred warmly by the hand.

"Be seated, Mr. Maynard," he said, in a stately manner. "John"—to the boy—"you may leave us. McCrillis, I look to you to begin."

Fred Maynard accepted the proffered seat in silence, while Mr. McCrillis—one of New York's best known attorneys—fitted a pair of gold spectacles to his nose, coughed twice, drew from his pocket a legal document, yellow with age, and spread it open upon the table before him.

"Gentlemen, this is the 21st of August," he began. "To-day Frederick Maynard, grandson of my late client, Cadwallader Maynard, of this city, has reached the age of twenty-one."

Here the old lawyer paused, looked first at Fred, then at Mr. Endicott.

As neither spoke, he began again.

"I am now about to give you in substance," he continued, "a history of one of the most singular wills ever recorded in the City of New York.

"It is the will of Cadwallader Maynard, this young man's grandfather, a man whom I knew well in my younger days.

"He was a most eccentric gentleman, who resided in an old mansion at New Rochelle, on the shores of Long Island Sound.

"When I first became acquainted with Mr. Maynard he was a ruined man. Deeply in debt, and possessed only of this old mansion, which was so heavily mortgaged as to be almost valueless, it was not believed by those who knew him that at his age—it was more than sixty—he could by any possibility ever regain his former wealth and standing in the community in which he lived.

"That was in 1855. On the 19th of January, 1865, Cadwallader Maynard died, leaving to his son the sum of \$100,000, and to me to be held in trust for his grandson, the young man

now with us, the old mansion at New Rochelle, free and clear, to be given him at the age of twenty-one.

"Now, if you ask me how Mr. Maynard acquired this money I cannot tell you. It was something which no one ever knew.

"He did not work, embarked in no speculations, had no investments of any kind, and yet he accumulated during the last ten years of his life all this wealth.

"In his will it was expected that he would disclose the secret, but he did not. This is what he says:"

Here Mr. McCrillis turned to the document on the table before him and read as follows:

"To my son, Henry Maynard, whose reckless, dissipated character has brought disgrace upon my name, I bequeath, in spite of the wrong he has done to me, every penny of my worldly wealth except the house I live in. He will undoubtedly squander it—I expect him to do so—for which reason I reserve the secret by which it was obtained, and by which ten times that sum can still be obtained, for his son Frederick, who I hope and trust may grow up a better man.

"This secret I have have securely hidden in a manner which, though singular, will, I believe, prove effectual. The key to it I have written in a sealed document, which, together with a book of great rarity, entitled: A description of the City of New York, by Anthony Barber, published in 1790, I bequeath to my friend Henry McCrillis, to be held in trust for my grandson, Frederick Maynard, to be delivered into his possession on the day he attains the age of twenty-one. That he may make good use of the wealth which the knowledge of this secret is bound to bring him, is ever my earnest prayer."

The document was signed, witnessed and sealed.

Having completed his reading, the old lawyer laid it on the table and turned to Fred.

The young man sat in anxious expectation awaiting that which was the next to come.

"Now let us proceed to business," said Mr. McCrillis. "You know, Fred, that you father, true to your grandfather's prognostications, squandered his fortune, broke your mother's heart and sent her to an early grave; finally dying himself, a ruined man."

Fred nodded silently, his face bearing a look of pain.

"You know also that he made every effort to discover this secret, but signally failed."

Fred nodded again.

"Very good," continued the lawyer. "I was true to the trust reposed in me. Twenty years ago I deposited the old book and the sealed document with Mr. Endicott for safe keeping. We will now proceed to examine them. Of what they may have to tell us, I am as ignorant as yourself. Mr. Endicott, it is your turn now. The appointed time has come."

The banker touched a bell.

In answer there appeared the young man who had spoken to Fred Maynard as he passed through the office without.

"Carter," said the banker, "step into the vault and bring me the large envelope and a great book, which you will find on the top shelf on the right-hand side."

The young man, with a meaning glance at Fred, obeyed.

Placing the book and the sealed document upon the table he immediately withdrew.

Mr. McCrillis, adjusting his spectacles, took up the sealed document.

Meanwhile Fred allowed his eyes to rest upon the book.

It was a ponderous folio, bound in leather, and black with age.

The title, "A Description of the City of New York," was impressed in gold letters upon the back.

On the sides were four little knobs of black wood set in the binding in a peculiar manner, evidently with the intent to prevent the book from resting directly upon the table, and the binding becoming chafed thereby.

"Here is your grandfather's seal," said Mr. McCrillis. "I am about to break it—good Heavens, Mr. Endicott! This seal has already been broken! There has been some tampering here."

"Impossible!" cried the banker. "It was only yesterday that I examined it. I— Upon my word, McCrillis, you are right. The seal is broken, but perhaps the wax, which has become exceedingly dry, may have cracked itself."

The old lawyer shook his head dubiously.

Mr. Endicott looked much concerned.

"I shall investigate this," he said, nervously. "I will question every clerk in my employ. I'll do it now, if you wish."

"Suppose we open the document first," suggested Fred, speaking for the first time. "I am naturally anxious to hear what it has to say. Perhaps after all there is no harm done."

The suggestion seemed to strike the lawyer favorably.

He opened the paper at once.

"Brief, at all events," he muttered, as he flung it down before Fred. "Just like old Maynard, upon my word."

And in truth the sealed document was brevity itself.

Two words and two figures were all it contained.

"See page 99."

There was no more.

Unable to longer curb his impatience, Fred Maynard seized the old book and threw back the cover.

Dire disappointment awaited him.

Page 99 was missing.

It had been torn from the book.

The secret so long hidden remained a secret still.

CHAPTER II.

THE MISSING PAGE.

"Hey, Fred! hey, Fred! Hold up a minute. I want to speak to you."

It was the young man who had brought the old book from the vault who thus exclaimed, running up behind Fred Maynard, when fifteen minutes later he turned the corner of Wall street and Broadway.

To dilate upon the disappointment of Fred Maynard is useless.

For years he had been looking forward for this disclosure, hoping that it might mend his fortunes, which, in truth, were bad enough, and now, after all, the disclosure had not come.

Neither have we time to go into Mr. Endicott's chagrin, his stern questioning of his employees, nor what the old lawyer said and did.

It is enough that Fred, fearful of the consequences if he remained longer away from the store, was obliged to leave the matter in the hands of Mr. McCrillis, and start at once on his return.

His heart beat wildly as he turned in response to the clerk's summons.

For the moment he believed that the missing page had been found.

"What is it, Carter?"

"I want to speak to you."

"About what? Have they found the page?"

"No. It's too blamed bad, Fred, and after all these years of waiting, too. Won't Bessie be disappointed, though? You have my sympathy, old man."

Fred who had backed up against the building on the corner of Wall street and Broadway, looked as though he cared very little whether he had it or not, but he made no direct reply.

"Who do you suppose could have done it?" asked the young man, presently.

"I'm sure I can't tell, Carter. So far as I know not a soul had any knowledge of the matter except Mr. McCrillis, Mr. Endicott, Bessie and yourself, unless you told some one——"

"Which I'll swear I didn't, Fred."

"Then I don't know what to think."

"Coming up to the house to-night, Fred?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, we'll talk it over then. I want——"

Here the speaker suddenly paused.

During the conversation he had not looked Fred squarely in the face, but had suffered his eyes to wander up and down Broadway.

Thus it happened that he suddenly became conscious of a slim, elderly man who stood idly leaning against a building on the opposite side of the street.

Now many people knew the slim, elderly man—most people, we had almost said.

It was Mr. Rushlow, the celebrated detective, whose usual haunt was down among the banking houses of Wall street and lower Broadway.

This being the case, there was nothing strange in seeing him exactly where he now was.

But strange or not, the sight of Mr. Rushlow seemed to disturb the young man greatly.

"Fred," he whispered, at the same time thrusting a package into the hands of our hero. "Take care of that till you see me to-night, will you, like a good fellow? I—I've got an appointment—I must go."

Before Fred found opportunity to speak the young man had shot off up Broadway and mingled with the crowd.

Fred Maynard stared after him in some amazement.

"Carter is up to mischief," he muttered, as without examining it he thrust the package into the inside pocket of his coat; "for Bessie's sake, I wish he would mend his ways."

Now Fred had not observed Mr. Rushlow, nor—inasmuch as

he had never heard of the gentleman—would he have known him if he had.

Had it been otherwise he might have seen the detective suddenly leave his post against the building opposite and hurry off up the street.

Meanwhile let us follow the young man from the banking house of Endicott & Co.

First, however, it becomes necessary to introduce him.

We have heard him called "Carter." That is his first name—Green is his last.

For two years and over Fred Maynard had been engaged to the sister of Carter Green.

It was on this ground that he tolerated his acquaintance at all.

He knew his prospective brother-in-law to be a wild, dissipated fellow, and in knowing this believed that he knew the worst.

Here Fred was wrong.

He did not know half.

Not for an instant did he dream that Carter Green would stoop to crime.

Passing over the hours that intervened between the interview on the corner and nine o'clock, let us take up Carter Green again.

We find him seated by the open window in a small and exceedingly dirty bedroom, over a saloon in Forsyth street, between Bayard and Canal.

The window overlooked the back yard of a high tenement fronting on Chrystie street, and facing Carter Green sat a young man of rakish, dissipated appearance, flashily dressed, smoking a vile cigar.

There was a shed immediately beneath the window, from which to the yard mentioned the descent could be easily made.

This point is of importance and should be remembered, for reasons soon to be disclosed.

"Well, so you've come at last, have you?" asked the rakish young man, putting his feet upon the window-ledge. "Upon my word, Green, I began to think you never would."

"Couldn't help it, Gil," was the reply. "That blamed Rushlow twigged me. I've been dodging about for the last five hours. There's something wrong, Gil. Take my word for it, we've got to skip."

The face of Gil Vose, the young man addressed, turned deathly pale.

"Heavens and earth, man! you don't say so!" he whispered, with a nervous glance toward the door. "What can he have learned? Say, Green, he didn't see you coming in here?"

"You bet he didn't. I took precious good care of that. Have you got any tobacco about you, or a cigar?"

"Here's a cigar," replied Gil, producing the mate to his Regalia de Avenue B, and passing it over to his friend. "Upon my word you've broken me up completely. We mustn't stay fooling round a minute. How about the book?"

"Well, I did it."

"Did what?"

"Tore out page 99, and here it is."

"Green, you don't mean it?"

"But I do though, Gil Vose. I've got it in my pocket now."

"Thought you wouldn't go back on your 'Johnny Goodboy' of a brother-in-law to be?"

"I've changed my mind, and that's all it has amounted to."

"The deuce you say. I thought all you had to do was to see page 99 in that book to learn the secret of his grandfather's fortune?"

"I thought so, too, when I read what was written in the document of which I broke the seal, as you know, but it seems that I was mistaken. If I had had one minute more I could have accomplished it. I was trying to read what was written on the page, but the vault was dark and Endicott, McCrillis and Fred were waiting for me outside in the room, so I gave it up, never once supposing that it would make any difference when I read it, but all the same it did."

While speaking Carter Green had drawn from his pocket a thin, worn sheet of paper.

"See," he said, holding it up. "It is page 99 of Barber's Description of New York City, a book so rare that in all probability no other copy could ever be obtained. Look for yourself, Gil Vose; see if what you make out of it agrees with my idea."

He handed the page to his companion, who arose and walked to a bureau where burned a greasy lamp.

Evidently Mr. Vose's early education had been sadly neglected.

He could be heard audibly spelling out the words and making the slowest kind of headway toward comprehending the contents of page 99.

"Here—give it to me," exclaimed Green, snatching it away from him at last. "You'll not get through with it in a hundred years at the rate you are going on."

"It's my eyesight, Green. It gets worse every day."

"Stuff and nonsense! You never learned to read, Gil Vose. That's what's the matter with you."

"Well, supposin' 'tis so? No need to fling it in a feller's face, is there? Come, tell me what the blamed thing says."

"It says," began Green, touching a match to his cigar, "that in the year 1778 the British Government sent over a million of dollars in gold coin to meet the expenses of the Revolutionary war."

"The money was brought in the ship Black Warrior, which struck a rock just off New Rochelle in attempting to beat down through Hell Gate, and sank to the bottom with the money on board. That's what the printing on the page is about, Gil."

"Well, and what of it? They raised her again, I s'pose. Anyhow, I don't believe it is true. What did she want to come in by the sound for, instead of coming up the bay?"

"Because the Government desired to keep the arrival of so large a sum a secret. Now you just hold on a second. That's all very well as far as it goes, but it ain't all there is on page 99. Do you see this writing on the bottom?"

"Of course, I ain't blind."

"That's the clew to old man Maynard's secret. It is what I ought to have read before I let that book go out of my hands."

"Yes; well?"

"Well, I'll read it to you, Gil, and—by Judas! The window! the window!"

Instantly Mr. Carter Green leaped through the open window on to the roof of the shed, thence to the back yard beyond, across which he ran like a deer.

He was followed by Gil Vose, who had heard his warning cry.

Now the cause of this sudden action on the part of these two worthies was the opening of the bedroom door which Vose had neglected to lock.

In itself the opening of a door is a very simple thing.

When a man stands in terror of the law, however, and sees his door opened by a detective of Mr. Rushlow's reputation, one cannot blame him for acting with all the promptness that circumstances will permit.

And this was precisely what happened.

Instead of listening to the secret of page 99, Gil Vose went flying through the alley which adjoined the Chrystie street tenement, Carter Green making excellent time ahead of him, and Mr. Rushlow, the detective, at his heels.

Meanwhile, page 99 torn from Barber's Description of New York City had fallen out of the window, dropped from Carter Green's nerveless hand.

For a while it lay there undisturbed, until along toward midnight, a light breeze took up the missing page and wafted it down into the yard of the tenement below.

CHAPTER III.

A MAGNANIMOUS ACTION.

"Bessie, do you really love me?"

"Fondly, tenderly, Fred, my darling. You know that I love you more than tongue can tell."

"And you love me as fondly with my ruined prospects as when certain that I would be able to stand before you to-night a wealthy man?"

"Money is nothing to me, my darling. In some little cottage we can be as happy as though you were possessed of all the wealth of the world."

It was Fred Maynard and Bessie Green.

Bessie, the bonniest little blue-eyed lass in all the world to Fred.

The scene was in the parlor of one of the coziest houses in Harlem, where Bessie Green and her widowed mother had long supported themselves in comparative comfort by the joint labor of willing hands and active brains.

The parlor was tastefully furnished in a manner that bespoke a time when the family was possessed of more abundant means.

Sofa, easy-chairs, piano, a handsome bookcase, lace curtains at the windows—to glance down upon it one would never dream of straitened means.

Upon leaving the banking house of Endicott & Co., Fred had placed the book in the hands of Mr. McCrillis, who promised to employ the most able detective skill in the city to search for the missing page.

Detained at the store until an unusually late hour, it was

ten o'clock before the young man found himself in position to fulfil his appointment with his prospective bride.

Upon arriving at the house Fred had related to Bessie the occurrences of the afternoon.

"It makes no difference to me, Fred," had been her reply.

"Rich or poor, I love you all the same."

Then followed the dialogue noted above.

It was the pleasantest thing that had greeted the ears of Fred Maynard that day.

"Bessie, you are a true heart," he exclaimed, throwing his arms about the girl and pressing her to his breast. "I shall work for you with a will, darling. Whether the missing page is ever found or not, it shall make no difference to us."

"None at all, Fred. Since we were reduced to poverty I have been happy—happy in my work. At least I should be so were it not for one thing."

"You refer to your brother," said Fred, flinging himself into a comfortable arm-chair, Bessie taking a seat on—well, we will not enlarge on this.

"Yes, to Carter. He goes from bad to worse. Out night after night—sometimes brought home in a state of beastly intoxication. Mother is almost wild about it, and as for me, I am in constant terror lest he should commit some act that will result in his arrest."

Inwardly Fred thought that the kindest thing that Carter Green could do would be to get himself into State prison for a century, more or less.

Of course he did not speak his thoughts.

That would never have answered in the world.

"There's something going on at the present time," continued Bessie. "What it is I can't make out, but I know my brother is dreadfully worried. Oh, I do wish he would reform!"

"By the way, where is Carter?" asked Fred, who scarce knew what to say. "He gave me a package to keep for him this afternoon—said he would meet me here to-night."

"A package?"

"Yes—here it is."

It was a small packet about three inches in length by seven in width.

It was done up in brown paper and tied with a string.

It looked for all the world like a package of bills.

"What do you suppose it is?" asked Bessie, anxiously. "It seems very strange that Carter should give it to you. Hadn't you better open it and see?"

"I shouldn't like to do that, Bessie. It's Carter's affair, not yours or mine. I have no right to meddle with it."

"Well, I suppose you know best," replied the girl, as Fred restored the packet to his pocket. "I feel a constant terror lest—why, here is Carter now."

Bessie Green sprang suddenly to her feet, startled by the opening of the door.

It was indeed Carter Green.

His clothing was disarranged, his face as pale as death.

He looked like some hunted creature as he staggered into the room.

"Sis, it's all up with me," he breathed hoarsely, as he fell into a chair. "I've got to skip. Where's ma?"

"Gone out to see a sick friend. Oh, brother, what do you mean?"

"I mean that the detectives are after me," was the fierce response. "I've dodged them so far, because I wanted to bid you and ma good-by. I'm going to quit New York forever. After to-night I shall never trouble you again."

Womanlike, Bessie burst into tears.

"Come, none of that!" cried her brother, roughly. "It takes time and I ain't got it to spare. Fred Maynard, have you got that package I gave you this—Heavens! what's that?"

"That" was nothing less than a loud ring at the door-bell.

With a cry as of some hunted animal, Carter Green sprang toward the window, and concealing himself for the instant behind the curtains, peered out upon the stoop.

"It's Rushlow the detective!" he breathed, creeping back. "He's right on top of me. I'm going out the back window and over the fences. Bessie, if you have any love left for me in your heart, you'll keep that man from following me as long as you can."

He was gone.

Now every moment was precious.

Meanwhile the bell rang again.

At the same instant the footsteps of the single servant maintained in the household were heard crossing the hall in answer.

"Stop her! stop her! Oh! save him!" breathed Bessie, staggering forward. "I——"

She paused.

The excitement was too much for one so frail.

Doubtless she would have fallen had not Fred Maynard caught her sinking form and clasped it in his arms.

"Courage, darling! Courage!" he whispered. "There are ways that can yet be tried, and—but hush! He is here."

Unceremoniously the parlor door was flung back.

A tall, elderly man hastily entered.

"I want Carter Green," he said in a stern voice, at the same time throwing back the lapel of his coat and exhibiting a detective's shield.

His hand was upon Fred Maynard's arm even as he spoke.

"Speak, quick! Where is Carter Green?" he repeated again. Fred did not hesitate.

One glance at the shrinking form which clung to him appealingly furnished incentive enough.

"I am Carter Green," he said, boldly. "What do you mean, sir, by this impertinent intrusion? What is your business with me?"

CHAPTER IV.

THE MIGRATIONS OF A PAGE.

Page 99 lay upon the pavement of the yard behind the Chrystie street tenement all that night.

It was sheltered from the wind by the high buildings on all sides of it, and lying close to the row of woodhouses in the shadow, the women who came to draw water at the hydrant

which stood in the centre of the yard during the late hours of the evening and the early hours of the morning passed it by without seeing it at all.

This was fortunate.

Had it been otherwise, the fate of page 99 would have been unquestionably sealed.

When the women from the tenement came to the hydrant for water—especially in the early morning—that meant cooking.

Cooking necessitates the lighting of a fire, and had page 99 fallen into the hands of any one of them, it would have been first wrapped up in the good dame's apron, then wrapped around some sticks of kindling wood, a match touched to it, and—psist! away it would have gone in a blaze.

Had this happened the secret of page 99 would have found its end in smoke.

But fate had otherwise willed it.

Through many wanderings page 99 was destined to drift into a harbor of comparative safety at last.

Of course neither Carter Green nor Gil Vose came back to look for it.

They had all they wanted to attend to in keeping out of the clutches of Mr. Rushlow, the detective. This, as we are aware, was particularly the case with Carter Green.

The first person who came into the yard after the women above mentioned was a young German mechanic with red face, sleepy eyes, and a tousled head of tow-colored hair.

He washed his face and hands at the hydrant, then, after looking in vain for a piece of paper to serve as a towel, wiped his face with his coat sleeve, and dried his hands by rubbing them against the broadest portion of his pantaloons.

Fortunately, the shadows still hung thick about the woodsheds.

Had it not been so, right here would have been the end of page 99.

Just after sunrise the shoemaker whose shop was in the basement of the tenement tumbled out of bed.

He was very short, thickset, and over all a very dirty man.

As for his hands, they were so thickly encased in a crust of cobbler's wax and blacking that it is doubtful if any of the original skin could be seen at all.

There was a similar crust, somewhat less thick, upon his face, which he sometimes remembered to wash—at least once in the week.

Now this happened to be one of the cobbler's washing mornings.

"Face looks kinder dirty," he muttered, as he fastened his one suspender and surveyed himself in the triangular bit of looking-glass which was nailed up beside the bed. "It's a nice warm morning, guess I'll take a wash; let's see if I can't raise a bit of soap."

After rummaging about his work-bench—the cobbler was a bachelor—in search of this desirable article, when one proposes to wash, he was obliged to give it up at last, for the excellent reason that there had been no soap in his establishment for more than a year.

"Never mind," said the cobbler, taking down a dirty towel

from a nail, "I can get along without—must buy some soap—it will be all the same a hundred years hence."

With this pious reflection the cobbler proceeded to perform his semi-occasional ablutions at the hydrant, completing them just as the rising sun chased the shadows which clustered around the woodsheds away.

It was then that the cobbler espied page 99 lying quietly on the pavements.

"That's a good piece of paper," he muttered, as he stopped and picked it up. "Looks like the leaf out of some book, an' a mighty big one, too. It's big enough to wrap up a pair of shoes in. Guess I'll take it in."

Now, inasmuch as the cobbler could not read and never bought a newspaper, paper for wrapping was as a rule somewhat scarce in his humble shop.

He therefore laid page 99 carefully away upon a shelf, and there it remained during the entire day.

There was a little wood engraving upon the page, executed in the rude style of a hundred years ago.

This the cobbler did not stop to look at; if he had he would not have known what it meant, for it represented New York as a city of a few hundred houses—just as it had looked a century before.

Just at night a laborer entered the cobbler's shop.

He lived in Harlem, he was working on a new building just below on Chrystie street.

The day before the sole of his shoe coming entirely off while at work mixing mortar, the laborer had been obliged to buy a new pair, leaving the old ones with the cobbler for him to mend as best he could.

"Got my shoes done, boss?" asked the laborer.

The cobbler had got them done, and he said so. The laborer paid for them, receiving the shoes with page 99 tied around them.

Of course it was too small a piece of paper to cover them, and the shoes stuck out at both ends.

This made no difference to the laborer, however. The paper on which page 99 was printed being made of stronger material than paper nowadays, it did not break, and the laborer put the bundle under his arm and trudged away to his Harlem home.

Now, the laborer's wife kept a candy-shop—a small affair, at which the ragged children in the neighborhood were the only customers, of course.

Seeing that the piece of paper which had come wrapped around her husband's shoes was good and strong, the laborer's wife took it into the shop, and that evening made it into a funnel to inclose five cents' worth of peppermint drops which she sold to a widow who stopped in to buy the sweets for her little girl at home.

The widow lived in Brooklyn and was herself a shopkeeper, dealing in thread, needles and pins.

As a consequence page 99 crossed the river that night, and after spending a day or two with the widow, started forth on its travels once more, this time wrapped around three spools of thread and a piece of black braid.

This time it only went round the corner, and was thrown into a housewife's closet, where it remained for a full week, going out into the world at last wrapped around a carpenter's

chisel, taken by the housewife's husband on his way to work. By this time it had become somewhat crumpled, and as the carpenter—that was the man's business—unwrapped the chisel at the new building on which he was employed, he tossed page 99 aside, and the wind catching it up, it was blown across the street into the gutter, where it lodged, remaining unobserved for an hour or more.

It was a dangerous spot.

Should rain come and wet it, that would be the last of page 99.

By and by an old man dressed in a snuff-colored coat and wearing a dirty brown wig shambled along the street.

His steps were slow and feeble, his eyes rested continually on the pavement, hence they chanced also to rest on page 99.

Now by singular fortune it happened that the old man in the snuff-colored coat was a dealer in books quite as old as himself.

His place of business—to which he was then on his way—was down in a dark cellar in Nassau street, New York, between Fulton and Ann.

He spied page 99 at once, recognizing its age in the peculiar color of the paper and by the style of the print.

"What's this—what's this?" he muttered, as he stopped and picked it up. "A page from Barber's Description of New York City, as I live. How came it here, I wonder? Wish it was the whole book! 'Twould be a good fifty dollars in my pocket then."

He was about to throw it down when his eyes fell upon the old wood cut.

"That will bring ten cents, at any rate," he thought, and folding the page carefully he put it in his pocket, and later in the day threw it into a pasteboard box of similar engravings in his Nassau street cellar.

Page 99 had found a home in a place where it would be appreciated at last.

CHAPTER V.

FRED MAYNARD FINDS HIMSELF IN A PECK OF TROUBLE.

At the magnanimous though false announcement made by Fred Maynard Mr. Rushlow smiled.

"Young man, you do not speak the truth," he said, quietly. "You are not Carter Green, though I strongly suspect that I want you as well as he."

"Sir!"

"Oh, you needn't get on your high horse and assume the indignant!" exclaimed Mr. Rushlow, keeping a tight hold upon Fred's arm. "I want your friend on a charge of robbery preferred by Endicott & Co., the bankers. I saw you in his company at the corner of Broadway and Wall street this afternoon, acting suspiciously, and I mean precisely what I say."

As he spoke Mr. Rushlow cast his eyes rapidly about the rooms.

The back parlor window stood wide open, and toward this he strode quickly.

"Some one has just passed out of this window," he said, holding up a little scrap of cloth which clung to a nail which for some purpose or other had been driven into the window-sill. "It will pay you better to tell the truth than to lie. Answer me, young man. Was the person from whose clothes this cloth was torn Carter Green?"

Fred was silent.

"I will answer you, sir," cried Bessie, drawing herself up proudly. "Fred, you shall not offer yourself as a sacrifice for my worthless brother. Carter did go through that window, sir. He saw you coming and escaped. Of what crime he may have been guilty I do not know; but when you accuse Fred Maynard of being implicated with him, you do him a terrible wrong."

"You say so, do you?" exclaimed Mr. Rushlow, at the same time thrusting his hand into the side pocket of Fred's loose sackcoat. "Then how about this? As I suspected, it is a part of the money stolen from the safe of Endicott & Co."

Fred stared at the package dumbly.

Opened by Mr. Rushlow's hand, a pile of bank bills of large denominations stood revealed.

Bessie saw them, too, and with a low cry fell fainting into her lover's arms.

It was the beginning of serious trouble for Fred Maynard.

He spent that night in the Tombs.

The developments which followed were startling.

It appeared that the day before Fred had called at the office of Endicott & Co., the banker had discovered that ten thousand dollars had been taken from his safe.

He immediately notified the police, who placed the matter in the hands of Mr. Rushlow, who, suspecting Carter Green, followed up that young man, with the result which we have just described.

A little less than half the amount of the stolen money had been found in the package. The package had been found on Fred.

In spite of every effort made by the detectives, the whereabouts of Carter Green could not be discovered.

Of course they could prove nothing against Fred Maynard, but it took the police six long weeks to find that out.

Meanwhile, being unable to procure bail, for even Mr. McCrillis seemed to regard him with suspicion, Fred was obliged to spend that length of time in the Tombs.

The boy's father, you see, had been a criminal.

That told against him.

Of all his friends and acquaintances, Bessie Green, who knew the truth, alone remained faithful, and was a daily visitor to his cell.

At last, after vainly endeavoring to extort from the boy a confession of a matter concerning which he knew absolutely nothing, the detectives gave it up, and Fred was set free.

Alas! how differently things had turned out from what he had anticipated on the afternoon when he attended the reading of his grandfather's singular will.

Instead of now being rich, or at least in the possession of a golden secret, the unfortunate young man found himself almost penniless and under suspicion of having been implicated in a terrible crime.

The first call made by Fred Maynard on the morning after his release—he had seen Bessie the first thing of all—was at the store of Bullard & Lum, where, until his arrest, he had been employed.

Now throughout the weary days of his imprisonment Fred had heard nothing whatever from Bullard & Lum.

He had written them a letter protesting his innocence, but had received no answer.

It was with many misgivings, therefore, that he entered their doors.

Mr. Bullard stood near the door talking with a customer.

"Get out," he exclaimed, shortly, the instant his eyes rested on Fred.

"But, Mr. Bullard, you will at least allow me the privilege of speaking, sir. I——"

"Get out, or I'll kick you out!" repeated the merchant, growing very red in the face.

Of course Fred got out.

There was, under the circumstances, absolutely nothing else to do.

The next night—we may as well mention it here—he received a check by mail for the trifling balance of salary due him by the firm, which ended forever his dealings with Bullard & Lum.

It took a full hour for Fred Maynard to recover his self-possession.

Of a nature somewhat sensitive, it was with difficulty that he could control himself at all.

The loss of his situation in itself did not disturb him, for he had long been heartily sick of Mr. Bullard's contemptible meanness and faultfinding way.

But how was he to get another?

His name had appeared in the newspapers in connection with the Endicott robbery, he had been summarily dismissed from his situation; how then could he hope to get another, while to all intents and purposes he remained branded as a thief?

It was a gloomy outlook.

Nothing short of the confession of Carter Green could restore to him his good name.

This it seemed most unlikely that he would ever be able to obtain.

After wandering aimlessly about the streets for an hour or two, Fred mustered up sufficient courage to call upon Mr. McCrillis.

The old lawyer received him coldly.

"Well, young man, they have let you out, I see," was the lawyer's greeting, as Fred entered his private office. "You have managed to get yourself into a very bad box."

Fred stood before his former friend, tears filling his eyes in spite of every effort to restrain them.

"Surely you don't think me guilty, Mr. McCrillis?" was all he could manage to say.

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders.

"It makes very little difference what I think," he said; "but let me tell you, my young friend, you have had an exceedingly narrow escape. Better take warning by your father, and mend your ways while there's time."

Fred was silent.

It was painfully evident that no amount of talk could mend matters here.

"What do you propose to do?" asked Mr. McCrillis at length.

"I'm sure I don't know, sir. I've lost my place at Bullard & Lums."

"That don't surprise me. It was to be expected."

"I would like to get another as soon as possible."

"Well, I can't help you. Here's the key to the old house up at New Rochelle. It is yours now. Perhaps you can sell it and go into some little business with the proceeds. What shall I do with the book?"

"Nothing has been heard of the missing page, I suppose?" asked Fred, falteringly, as he put the key into his pocket.

"Nothing whatever."

"You may keep the book for the present, Mr. McCrillis. I have no secure place for it. Good day."

He was moving toward the door, when the lawyer called him back.

"Here's five dollars for you, Fred," he said, in a somewhat kinder tone.

"Keep your money. I don't want it."

In another instant the office door had slammed and Mr. McCrillis was alone.

"I'll starve before I will accept charity from any one," muttered the young man, proudly, as he strode along Broadway. "I am young and strong and have two good hands to work. I'll show them what sort of stuff I'm made of. Now that I know the worst, I do not care. I shall test my plan at once."

Now, Fred's plan had been conceived during the weary hours spent in his cell at the Tombs.

It was simple, and promised to be effective—always providing it would work.

Continuing up Broadway as far as Fourth street, the young man here diverged into Lafayette place and entered a large brick building on the right-hand side of the way.

It was the famous Astor Library.

Here, arranged according to the most approved system, thousands upon thousands of volumes—far older than Fred's old book—reposed.

Ascending the stairs and approaching the desk, our hero waited in respectful silence until addressed by an attendant.

"What do you wish, sir?"

"To see a copy of Barber's Description of New York City."

The attendant stared.

"You ask for an exceedingly rare book, sir. We have not got it in this library. I only wish we had."

With a look of keen disappointment Fred was about to turn away, his plan overturned at the very outset, when the attendant called him back.

"Did you wish to see that book for any particular purpose?" he inquired.

"For a very particular purpose."

"I know a gentleman who owns a copy. I can give you his address. Whether or no he will allow you to see the book I cannot say."

Fred thanked the polite attendant, and received the address written on a card.

"John Gillespie, 822 West 27th street," was the way it read.

There was still hope, and Fred now directed his steps to the extreme west side of town.

Upon arriving at the number indicated upon the card, he was much surprised to find, instead of a fine residence such as one naturally would suppose the owner of so rare a book would possess, a dirty tenement swarming with children instead.

Nevertheless inquiry proved that there was no mistake in the address.

In the liquor saloon beneath the tenement he was informed that Mr. Gillespie resided on the top floor.

Fred ascended the three dark flights of stairs and knocked.

Presently a shuffling movement was heard within the room, and a tall, spare old Irishman, in his shirt sleeves, with a clay pipe in his mouth, appeared at the door.

"What's wanted?" he demanded, gruffly, speaking, nevertheless, with the accent of an educated man.

Fred presented the card given him in the Astor Library and made known his errand.

The Irishman eyed him for a moment keenly.

"What do you want to see that book for?" he demanded at length.

Now, for the life of him, Fred did not know what to say.

He did not feel like telling the man his story, nor was he able on the spur of the moment to frame any good excuse.

"I—I own the book, too," he stammered. "I know it's rare and will be very careful of it if you will allow me to examine it. You see, in my copy page 99 is torn out. I am anxious to see how it reads."

"Oh, that's it. is it?" said the Irishman, opening the door.

"Well, come in. I don't mind letting you see it. My neighbors down here don't appreciate these things, and I seldom allow any one to enter my room."

Once behind the door, Fred could do nothing but gaze about him in astonishment.

It was only a dirty bedroom into which he had been admitted, yet piled up on every side were books upon books, pile upon pile, reaching from the ceiling to the floor.

"Books are my hobby, young man," said Mr. Gillespie, locking the door behind him. "Don't think that I am a pauper because you find me living on the top floor of this tenement. I want you to understand that I own half the block and have neither wife nor child. There you are, Barber's Description of New York City, published in 1790, worth a good hundred dollar bill. Is that the book you want?"

The eyes of Fred Maynard sparkled as the old feller pulled a great folio from one of the piles and threw it upon the table which stood in the middle of the room.

It was differently bound from the copy now in the possession of Mr. McCrillis, but it was the same book still.

"I am a thousand times obliged to you, sir," he said.

"Don't mention it," returned the man. "There it is. Now see if you can find what you want."

With trembling hand Fred threw back the cover of the precious folio and turned to page 99.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OLD HOUSE ON THE BAY.

"The old house on the bay," as every one called it, was the only part of Fred Maynard's inheritance tangible and real.

Nor could this be considered as amounting to much, from a pecuniary point of view.

All that was really valuable of the once fine estate of Cadwallader Maynard had been willed to Fred's father, who had soon made "ducks and drakes" of it, as the saying goes.

He would have disposed of the old house and the land immediately around it just as quickly if he had had the power to do so.

Fortunately for Fred, right here it had always lain in the power of Mr. McCrillis to interfere.

So the old house on the bay, with its green shuttered windows, its tottering piazza and crumbling cornices, still remained in precisely the same condition that mysterious old Cadwallader Maynard had left it, standing on a little eminence overlooking the small indentation known as Fisher's bay, on the northerly shore of Long Island Sound.

It was a desolate, lonely spot, removed by a distance of more than a quarter of a mile from any house whatever and a good mile and a half from the village of New Rochelle.

Yet, lonely as the place was, it was here beneath his own roof, so to speak, that Fred Maynard had resolved to sleep on the night subsequent to his release from the Tombs.

He had often been at the old mansion in his boyhood.

Its lofty halls, moldering furniture and grim family portraits, which stared at one from over every mantel, had no ghostly terrors for him.

Just as it had been when Cadwallader Maynard was carried out of it in his coffin, so the old house still remained—save for such destruction as the tooth of time could bring about—when Fred entered it that night, having come up from New York on the way train leaving the Grand Central station at eight o'clock, walking over to Fisher's bay from New Rochelle.

Now Fred's plan, from which he had hoped so much, successfully carried out, as we have seen, up to a certain point, had failed him in the end.

Through the kindness of Mr. Gillespie, one of New York's most famous and most eccentric collectors of rare books relating to American history, Fred had obtained access to a copy of Barber's "Description of New York City," in which page 99 still remained.

Of course he had fully expected to learn the secret of his grandfather's wealth the moment his eyes rested upon it, or at least gain some clew upon which to act.

Well, he found the clew, if there was any satisfaction to be derived from that.

Page 99 told how a certain ship called the Black Warrior had sailed from England late in 1777, with a million of dollars in gold on board, intended as payment for the British troops then engaged in the attempt to crush the struggling colonies; how, early in 1778, the ship, coming secretly down Long Island Sound, had struck a rock off New Rochelle, sinking to the bottom with all her treasure on board.

Page 99 told all this in detail, but there was not a word to indicate at what special point off New Rochelle—a very indefinite attempt at location—the Black Warrior had sunk; not a hint to show that it was from the money chests of the sunken man—over that the fortune of Cadwallader Maynard had been obtained.

It was a bitter disappointment to Fred.

Still he felt, as he thanked Mr. Gillespie and left the Twenty-seventh street apartment, that his own common sense should

have told him that he need not expect to learn the whole truth.

Whatever page 99 in his own copy of Anthony Barber's rare book might have revealed, here, evidently, was all that it was possible for him to learn until the missing page could be found.

It was a hint, certainly, and one which Fred resolved to lose no time in following up.

Fortunately his time was all his own now.

He had come to the old house on the bay to take up his residence with an eye to business.

That business was to search for the wreck of the sunken ship.

"Pah! what a dismal old barn!" muttered the boy, as, turning the key given him by Mr. McCrillis, he threw back the front door. "It smells as musty as some old tomb. Let me see. It is fully ten years since I was here—yes, all of ten years. I was just eleven then, I remember, and now I am twenty-one."

There was a strong wind blowing off the sound, so he shut the door and proceeded to light a candle, which, with a tin candle-stick and provisions enough for his breakfast, he had purchased with a few cents of the money still remaining to him in New Rochelle.

Then, moving about from room to room, he began a tour of exploration of the house.

Here was furniture enough, such as it was, to enable him to marry Bessie Green and set up housekeeping at once.

It had been handsome and costly in its day, and though sadly the worse for long years of neglect, much that was valuable still remained.

In his early boyhood days Fred had lived in the old mansion, having been born, in fact, in one of its upper rooms.

By this time it was after ten o'clock, and being thoroughly tired out from the exciting events of the day, Fred sought this room which overlooked the short stretch of garden intervening between the house and the sound, and prepared to go to bed.

The room was precisely as he recollected it.

There was the same high four-post bedstead in which he had slept as a boy; the old clock with its swinging weights upon the wall, which used to tick so loudly—now silent, of course—the same high back chairs, the bureau with the lions' paws, even the bird cage, in which in those bygone days his pet canary, Dick, used to merrily sing.

Then the room had looked bright enough to him, now it seemed dark and gloomy, the very ghost, so to speak, of its former self.

Banishing all morbid memories, however, the boy made a hasty examination of the bed in which he proposed to sleep.

The patchwork quilt made by Fred's mother looked just the same as ever, but an examination of the sheets showed them to be lamp and moldy.

Fred resolved, therefore, to sleep in his clothes, and, extinguishing the candle, he threw himself, just as he was, upon the outside of the bed, and vainly tried to sleep.

It was no use.

Sleep would not come.

The sighing of the wind through the clump of tall pines outside his window disturbed him; the flapping of a shutter which came at intervals from some distant part of the old mansion disturbed him still more, as well as numerous other sounds besides.

The more he courted sleep the more sleep would not come, until at length, just as he had made up his mind to abandon all attempts to slumber, to get up, light the candle and go reading the paper, his ears were greeted with a new sound differing from all the rest.

It was altogether a remarkable noise.

It came from outside the house among the clump of pines.

and sounded for all the world like some one digging and throwing up earth with a spade.

The longer Fred listened to it the more perplexed he became, until at length he sprang from the bed, resolved at all hazards to ascertain what it meant.

Advancing toward the window, he raised it softly—he had thrown open the shutters upon retiring, in order that he might have some light in the room—and thrusting his head through the opening, he peered out among the pines beyond.

A few rods distant from the house rose a sort of hillock or mound, which Fred could not recollect ever having seen before.

As the boy now glanced toward it he suddenly beheld emerging, to all appearances, directly out of the side of this mound, the figure of an aged man with long, white hair and beard, wearing no hat, but dressed in an old-fashioned military coat with great epaulettes on his shoulders, which glittered in the moonlight among the pines.

In his hand the old man held a long-handled spade such as grave-diggers use.

On this he leaned pensively for a moment.

Then, raising his eyes upward in the direction of the watcher, he suddenly turned and seemed to dive, spade and all, headforemost directly into the mound.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE CELLAR—FRED MAYNARD RUNS FOUL OF MR RUSHLOW AGAIN.

Ghosts, as we have already stated, were things in which Fred Maynard had no belief.

Consequently, when he beheld the strange figure of the old man in revolutionary dress dive headforemost into the mound in the garden, it never once occurred to him that it might be a being from some other world.

Not at all.

Fred was of a nature entirely too practical for anything of the sort.

He knew perfectly well that the old house had long enjoyed the reputation of being haunted, but this knowledge made no impression on his mind.

You see it was his house.

He had known all about it since boyhood.

Therefore, while scarcely a person in the whole village could have been induced to cross the threshold after dark, Fred had entered alone without fear.

"There's some fooling going on outside there," he muttered, springing back from the window. "I'm afraid some tramp or other has taken to sleeping in the cellar. He couldn't have gone into that little hill as he seemed to do—there must be something the matter with my eyes.

"I'll soon hunt him off, whoever he is," he added, hurrying toward the door. "Wish I had a pistol or something. I ain't going to allow any tramps fooling around here."

In lieu of a pistol Fred seized an old Indian club, which had once been his special admiration, and, opening the door, ran downstairs two steps at a time.

Upon reaching the front door he found difficulty in opening it.

Somehow or other the great iron key seemed to have got stuck in the lock and would not turn.

"Confound the thing! What ails it?" he muttered, after having ineffectually twisted the key this way and that: "guess I'll go down cellar and go out the lower door."

This was a door at the top of a flight of stone steps leading

into the cellar beneath the house from the side facing the garden.

Wasting no further time, Fred lit a lantern and ran down into the cellar. It was a large one, extending under the entire house.

From one end to the other it was littered with boxes and barrels, great packing cases and various articles of furniture, all thickly covered with dust and showing symptoms of decay.

Waving his lantern before him, Fred pushed his way among these toward the stone steps.

As he passed an old lounge, which, having only three legs seemed to have braced itself up against a post to keep from toppling over, he was surprised to discover a pair of dirty blankets and an old quilt lying thereon.

Evidently the lounge had been used for a bed.

There were also crumbs scattered about here and there, and Fred's foot struck an empty beer bottle as he stooped and held the lantern over the lounge.

"Just as I thought," he muttered. "Some tramp or other has been sleeping here. Wonder how he got in? Through the cellar door probably, for the windows all have bars to them. I'd better look out. He may be hiding somewhere here now, and take a notion to pop a bullet into me for disturbing him."

This latter reflection was by no means a pleasant one.

Keeping a sharp lookout ahead, Fred moved on among the boxes in the direction of the cellar door.

It never once struck him that he was doing a very foolish thing, that under the circumstances it would be wiser to go back.

At twenty-one a man does not stop to do much reasoning.

Fred Maynard felt that his strong right arm, to say nothing of the Indian club, was good for an encounter with any cowardly tramp alive.

Still, though he listened intently, he heard nothing until he reached the cellar door.

Just as he was about to attempt to open it a noise behind him attracted his attention.

He turned quickly, obtaining a momentary glimpse of the head of the strangely-dressed old man whom he had seen dive into the mound in the garden.

It was slightly raised above a large packing case in one corner of the cellar.

The eyes were staring at him with a frightened expression from over the edge of the case.

The instant they caught a glimpse of Fred, the head suddenly ducked down out of sight behind the boxes, and some one could be heard running along the cellar floor.

Whoever this strange old party might be, he was evidently a great deal more frightened than Fred himself.

"Hold on there!" cried Fred, running down the steps and dashing across the cellar. "I'll teach you to use my house for a lodging-place, you miserable tramp! Hold on there, I say!"

But the old man showed no disposition to stop.

He could be distinctly seen now scudding along among the boxes and barrels, heading toward an old mahogany wardrobe which had lost a door and which stood leaning against the cellar wall.

He was not a large man, though evidently of great age, if white hair and a beard of the same color of enormous length went for anything.

His strangely-cut military coat and the cocked hat which he wore caused him to look for all the world like some old revolutionary officer, who had dropped out of the ancient picture of Washington crossing the Delaware, which hung over the mantel in the parlor above.

He ran straight for the old wardrobe, without once stopping to look behind him, and, upon reaching it, made one sudden leap inside and disappeared, headfirst, like harlequin in the pantomime, before Fred had time to utter another word.

Now, for the first time, the boy began to experience a sensation of fear.

What could it mean?

The wardrobe was close up against the wall, there was no space behind it, while the fact of the door being missing enabled him to see the whole of the inside, and, what was more, to see that the old man had disappeared as utterly as though he had been but the creation of an over-excited brain.

"Now, by thunder, I'm going to see the end of this," muttered Fred, moving toward the wardrobe. "That fellow is a perfect Jack-in-the-box. I'm going to know what it means."

It is one thing to make a resolve—another to carry it out.

A closer examination of the wardrobe revealed nothing.

To move the heavy mass of mahogany was a task too great for Fred's strength; but it was empty and its back apparently as solid as the wall itself.

He searched everywhere.

No trace of the singular old man could be found.

The bed-clothes, the crumbs and the beer bottle seemed to preclude the idea of anything supernatural.

Ghosts are supposed to be able to keep warm without the aid of blankets; neither do they leave crumbs behind them when they eat, nor are they supposed to be particularly partial to beer.

It was a complete mystery.

There had been nothing the matter with his eyes this time.

The longer Fred Maynard stared at the wardrobe the more puzzled he became.

Meanwhile all was as still as death in the cellar.

It seemed absolutely certain that there was no one there but himself.

"I'm going outside," muttered the boy, at length, and he moved toward the stone steps again.

To his surprise, he found the bolt of the cellar door badly rusted and hard to open.

It was plain that it had not been disturbed in a long time.

Having forced it back at last, Fred opened the door and stepped out.

He had advanced scarcely a dozen steps when a man suddenly sprang from around the corner of a building and seized him by the throat.

"I've got you now, you young vagabond!" exclaimed the voice of Mr. Rushlow, the detective. "A pretty chase you have led me. But no matter; you will not escape again."

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. RUSHLOW.

There was no shrewder detective on the entire New York force than Mr. Rushlow.

If he could have had his say in the matter, Fred Maynard, after his first examination before a magistrate, would have been immediately set free.

But Mr. Rushlow had had nothing to do with it.

At an early stage in the game he had been dispatched to Chicago on other business, returning on the day of Fred Maynard's release from the Tombs.

Now, in order to account for the sudden appearance of Mr. Rushlow upon the scene of action at the old house on Fisher's Bay, it is necessary that we go back to the hour of half-past nine in the evening.

At this time we find the detective seated in a little office in the great building No. — Broadway, before the door of which Mr. McCrillis, the lawyer, also had his sign displayed.

Away up on one of the higher stories Mr. Rushlow had some years before established this private den of his own, where he

could write, smoke, or sleep if he chose, without going a long distance from his usual haunts about Wall street and Broadway, and also without running the risk of being disturbed.

Few were aware of this.

There was no sign upon the door of the den, nothing to indicate that the office was occupied at all.

It is in the "den" that we find Mr. Rushlow at half-past nine on this particular evening.

He was sitting tilted back in a great wooden chair, with his heels resting upon the desk before him, engaged in the pleasing occupation of smoking a pipe.

The fact of the matter was Mr. Rushlow was tired out.

He had been rushed with business so during the past few weeks that he scarcely knew whether he stood on his head or his heels.

It was Rushlow here and Rushlow there; telegrams and letters. Applications for his services, written and personal, deluging him on every side.

No wonder, then, that he had well-nigh forgotten the robbery of Endicott & Co.'s. No wonder that this evening witnessed his retirement to the den in order that he might gain opportunity to rest his weary brain.

Now, Mr. Rushlow's den was so situated that it overlooked certain office windows on the opposite side of a deep well which afforded light to the tenants on the lower floors.

By looking out of his window, especially after the lights were lit, the detective could see everything that was going on in the offices of Puty & Blower, Grimwig & Maxwell, Henry McCrillis and half a dozen lawyers besides.

Not that he often did so.

Mr. Rushlow had entirely too much business of his own on hand to feel much interest in his neighbors' affairs.

Why, therefore, he should suddenly be seized with a notion to look through the window down into the well on that particular evening it is difficult to say.

Something possessed him, for he suddenly removed his feet from the desk, and after pacing the floor for a moment or two, thinking deeply upon an important case, he leaned against the window and looked down.

As he did so he noticed that while the offices of Puty & Blower and Grimwig & Maxwell were dark, within that of Mr. McCrillis' a light faintly burned.

"Strange," thought Mr. Rushlow, softly raising the window-sash and looking out into the well. "I never knew McCrillis' people to stay so late; always thought the old fossil one of the most methodical fellows in the world."

Still it was evident that some one was in the office of the old lawyer, for at the same moment the figure of a roughly-dressed young man could be seen shooting past the window as though trying to get out of sight as quick as possible.

He carried in his right hand the stump of a candle, shielding the flame with his left.

"Now, upon my soul, but that looks suspicious," muttered Mr. Rushlow. "If I know anything about thieves and their actions, that fellow is one. I'll bet five dollars they are after McCrillis' safe."

"But no, it is too early for that," he added, looking at his watch. "Surely, the crook must be a bold one who would undertake to blow up a safe in a building like this at half-past nine o'clock. I'll go into that vacant office next door, and perhaps I can get a better view."

Passing through a door which communicated with the adjoining office, by chance at that time vacant, the detective softly opened another window and again peered out into the well.

Here he could obtain a view of Mr. McCrillis' private office, the one into which he had previously looked being that occupied by the lawyer's clerks.

There stood the young man contemplating the great iron

safe, holding the candle in such a manner as to prevent its rays from being seen.

"It may be one of McCrillis' clerks," thought Mr. Rushlow. "I should feel flat enough if I were to go down and arrest one of the establishment. Guess I'll watch him a minute more."

He had been unable to see the face of the young man, who had kept his back turned constantly toward the window, but there was something about his figure and way of moving which struck Mr. Rushlow as decidedly familiar.

He had certainly seen the fellow somewhere before.

Just where he could not say.

Suddenly the young man was seen to raise his arm and with a hatchet strike heavily against a little book-case, with closed doors, which stood on top of the old lawyer's safe.

The door yielded to the blows almost immediately, and the fellow thrust his hand inside and drew out a great book.

Then it was that he turned—for the first time—in such a way as to enable Mr. Rushlow to see his face.

To the intense astonishment of the detective he saw that it was Carter Green.

"Jerusalem!"

The exclamation was emphatic, if somewhat indefinite.

In an instant Mr. Rushlow had dashed out of the vacant office into his own.

"Carter Green! It seems impossible that that fellow can have been hiding in New York all this time and I not know it. He seems to have fallen to the level of a common thief."

Catching up his hat and hurriedly thrusting his arms into his coat-sleeves, Mr. Rushlow was out of the office and dashing downstairs in less time than it takes us to pen the words.

Mr. McCrillis' office was two stories below his own den, and on the other side of the building.

Satisfied that he had not been observed, and fully believing that Carter Green was still inside the office, Mr. Rushlow, moving along the corridor on tip-toe, cautiously tried the door.

To his astonishment it immediately yielded.

Mr. Rushlow sprang inside with a bound, shooting his dark-lantern before him, only to find himself alone.

The safe, the desks, everything except the little book-case remained undisturbed, and from that a single book seemed to have been taken out.

"The young vagabond! He must have seen me!" exclaimed Mr. Rushlow. "It's science against legs now! Hold up! Mr. Carter Green, we'll see who's the better man!"

He was out of the office and down the stairs like a flash.

When he gained Broadway, he perceived Carter Green, with a great book under his arm, walking quietly along at a short distance ahead of him, as unconcerned as you please.

Of course, the first inclination of Mr. Rushlow was to steal up behind the fellow, and immediately place him under arrest.

Upon second thought, however, he determined upon a different course.

What Endicott & Co. desired even more than the arrest of the man who had robbed their vault was to recover the money which had been stolen.

Now half of it had already been recovered—the half which belonged to Carter Green.

From the first the detective had suspected Gil Vose, as desperate a young rascal as ever trod in two shoes, of being at the bottom of the whole affair; and for obvious reasons he was as anxious to capture Vose as Carter Green.

Moreover, if Fred Maynard was to be believed—and Mr. Rushlow did believe him—it was Carter's share of the stolen money which had been already recovered.

Presumably Mr. Vose still retained the greater portion of it.

Mr. Rushlow, therefore, came to the instant conclusion that the part of wisdom demanded that he should shadow Carter Green before arresting him, in the hope that by so doing he might discover the hiding-place of Gilbert Vose.

"Strange, that he makes no attempt to hurry," thought Mr. Rushlow as he stole after him. "One would almost be inclined to think that he had broken into that office for the express purpose of getting possession of that book. Surely he cannot have seen me, or he wouldn't take matters so coolly. I'll be blessed if I can see through it at all."

And indeed the conduct of Carter Green seemed still more puzzling to the detective, when, after shadowing him to the Grand Central station, he saw the young man buy a ticket for New Rochelle.

Bent upon learning the whereabouts of Vose if it were a possible thing, Mr. Rushlow purchased a ticket for the same place, and when the train leaving New York at eleven o'clock rolled out of the station, both himself and Carter Green were on board.

On arriving at New Rochelle, Mr. Rushlow got off on the wrong side of the train, and stealing around behind the station, watched the movements of Carter Green.

He had already left the cars, and still carrying the great book stolen from the office of Mr. McCrillis, which he had previously taken the precaution to wrap in paper, he moved off rapidly down a road leading away from the village and toward the Sound.

Where was he going?

More mystified than ever, Mr. Rushlow crept after him, determined to learn.

Now came difficulties which had not previously existed.

In the city it had been an easy matter to follow unseen in the footsteps of Carter Green; here in the open country it became quite another thing.

They had hardly got out of sight of the village before the young man began to show signs of uneasiness.

He would stop suddenly and look behind him; then hurrying along for a short distance, stop and turn again.

For Mr. Rushlow to get out of sight was simply impossible.

Twice he tried to do so by dodging behind trees, but Carter Green having once caught a glimpse of him—it was too dark for him to see his face—this only made matters worse.

From that moment the wary glances shot behind by Carter Green became more frequent.

It was evident that he began to suspect that he was being followed, and was growing very uneasy in consequence.

At last—it was after a mile or more had been traversed and the fresh salt breeze showed that they were nearing the Sound—he caught Mr. Rushlow in the very act of creeping into the shadow of a low stone wall which divided the road from the grounds surrounding an ancient-looking mansion which stood amid a cluster of pines, upon a little eminence overlooking a bay.

Instantly Carter Green took to his heels and began to run.

This brought matters to a crisis at once.

There was nothing for it but to start in chase or soon be left behind.

Mr. Rushlow chose the former alternative, and laying aside all attempt at concealment, started after the fugitive at the top of his speed.

Suddenly Carter Green, springing from the road, leaped over the low stone wall.

As he did so his foot slipped and he fell sprawling on the other side, the book dropping from under his arm.

Then it was that Mr. Rushlow thought he had him.

He was over the wall in an instant, but only to find himself too late.

Right ahead of him, running toward a corner of the old mansion, he could see Carter Green, who had gathered himself up and dashed on at lightning speed.

At his feet the great book taken from the office of Mr. McCrillis lay upon the ground.

Wisely or not, Mr. Rushlow stopped to pick up the book.

It was only the delay of an instant, but that instant afforded the fugitive the advantage he sought.

He was just turning the corner of the house when Mr. Rushlow next saw him.

Springing after him, the detective turned the corner a few seconds later, and encountering a young man, whom at the moment he supposed to be the object of his pursuit, seized him by the throat and pressed him hard against the side of the house.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. RUSHLOW DISCOVERS THAT HE HAS MADE A MISTAKE.

"I've got you now, you young vagabond!" exclaimed Mr. Rushlow. "A pretty chase you have led me! But no matter, you will not escape again."

Now, it happened to be Fred Maynard and not Carter Green who had fallen into the hands of Mr. Rushlow.

The detective discovered his mistake the instant our hero spoke.

"You! You! Again!" he cried, releasing his hold on Fred's throat and staring in astonishment. "What kind of work is this? Is Carter Green always to turn into Fred Maynard, this time in my very hands?"

"Carter Green! I don't understand you!" answered Fred, feeling of his throat. "I haven't seen Carter Green in a month. What the mischief do you mean by springing on a fellow in front of his own house at midnight and nearly choking him to death? Keep off, now! Don't you touch me again! I don't care if you are a dozen times a detective, if you come near me I'll knock you over the head with this club."

And Fred swung his Indian club about in a manner so threatening that the detective drew involuntarily away.

"Stop! Put that thing down or there'll be trouble!" he said, sternly. "I have nothing to do with you. Tell me what has become of Carter Green?"

"I tell you again I don't understand you. I haven't seen Carter Green since the night you arrested me a month ago."

"Young man, have a care—you are lying to me. I have followed Carter Green to this place. He turned the corner of this house not a second ago. I don't propose to lose him now."

"You followed Carter Green here?"

"I certainly did. Don't waste words. You know well enough. The fact of your own presence at this lonely spot in the dead of night proves to my mind that you are more guilty than I had supposed."

"Why, I live here!" cried Fred, indignantly. "This house belongs to me."

"Nonsense!"

"It's the truth," and in a few brief words Fred proceeded to explain, relating also the strange events which had just occurred.

Evidently Mr. Rushlow was impressed with the truth of his statements.

"Quick! Quick! Help me. Look for Carter Green!" he exclaimed. "He cannot be far away."

Together they searched the grounds surrounding the old mansion, finding no one.

"Is that the Sound down at the foot of yonder slope?" demanded the detective, as they found themselves back upon the scene of their first encounter a few minutes later on.

"Yes. That is Fisher's Bay."

"Perhaps he has taken to the water!" was the muttered reply, and Mr. Rushlow, followed by Fred, hurried down the slope.

The moon was shining with a brightness almost equal to day, illuminating the water for a mile around.

Scarcely had he gained the shore than an exclamation of supreme disgust escaped the lips of the baffled detective.

Out upon the bay, distinctly visible in the moonlight, a small boat could be seen with two men pulling at the oars.

To Fred's utter astonishment, he perceived in one of the rowers his mysterious revolutionary officer, in the other no less a person than the brother of his intended wife—Carter Green!

CHAPTER X.

FURTHER ADVENTURES OF PAGE 99.

We left page 99, torn from Fred Maynard's copy of Barber's Historical Description of the City of New York, reposing quietly in the box among numerous other loose pages, in the old bookdealer's cellar in Nassau street between Fulton and Ann.

It was a queer place.

We mean the cellar—not the box; though that was a queer place, too, being filled with pages torn from old books of every sort, gathered together solely for the pictures they contained.

The cellar was very damp—very dirty; in summer very hot, in winter very cold.

It contained a heterogeneous mass of old books, old newspapers, old pamphlets and old maps, scattered about in such beautiful confusion that Michael Moran—that was the name of the old man in the snuff-colored wig—had not the faintest idea what he owned himself.

How on earth he ever managed to gather such a mass of stuff about him seemed a mystery; yet there it was, and there he was on the particular evening that Mr. Rushlow chased Carter Green up to New Rochelle, seated by the side of a little cylinder stove in a decrepit old arm-chair, held together by a piece of rope, lost in a book as old and musty-looking as he was himself.

People came down into the cellar, looked at the books, handled them, priced them and went out again; but nobody seemed to buy.

Old Michael Moran answered their questions mechanically, scarce raising his eyes from his reading.

He didn't seem to care whether he sold a book or not, and, as a matter of fact, we don't believe he did.

Those who did not know him thought him the crustiest old curmudgeon imaginable; those who did paid not the slightest attention to his crustiness, knowing that it was only his way.

Among these latter appeared to be a man who entered the cellar at about half-past six on this particular night.

He was an Irishman, almost as shabby in appearance as Michael Moran himself, though perhaps not quite as old.

He wasted not even a glance at the mass of books, but walked directly up to the snuff-colored wig, which could be seen in the dim light behind the stove.

"Evenin', Mister Moran."

The snuff-colored wig is raised. The watery eyes, behind a pair of battered spectacles, stare for an instant blankly at the speaker as he stands on the opposite side of the stove.

"Good-evenin', Mister Gillespie."

"Anything new in my line, Mr. Moran?"

"Let me see—let me see. I think not. By the way, what is your line, Mister Gillespie? Upon me word, you've had so many hobbies that I cannot keep the run of them at all."

"Original editions of British Authors, Mr. Moran."

"Oh, ay. I rimimber that was the latest. I have a copy of

the original edition of Tom Moore's Irish Melodies somewhere that I laid one side for ye, Mister Gillespie, but I'm blest if I can tell where I put it now."

The eyes of the old book collector sparkled with delight.

"You must find it!" he exclaimed eagerly. "I've been looking for an original Moore for years."

A long hunt for the original Moore followed.

A candle was lighted, dark corners ransacked, piles upon piles of musty volumes overhauled.

It was found at last under a mass of old newspapers in a corner of the cellar, and Michael Moran, blowing the dust off it, placed the welcome book in the customer's hands.

"What's the price?"

"Tin dollars—and dirt cheap at that."

Ten dollars!

A copy of Tom Moore's melodies, finely bound, gilt edges, excellent paper, can be anywhere procured for a third of that sum.

Yet Mr. Gillespie paid the price willingly, pocketed his prize with a grunt of satisfaction and turned to depart.

"Look here," said the dealer, "didn't you collect old woodcuts relating to New York city, once?"

"Yes."

"There's a few in that pasteboard box. You might look them over; mebbe you'll find something you want."

And the book-crank—he was nothing less—did look over the contents of the pasteboard box.

In less than a minute his fingers—and they were very dirty ones—had closed on page 99.

"How much for this?"

The dealer took the page and turned it over carefully.

"That's very rare. I'll have to charge you a dollar," he said.

"All right, here's the money," and pocketing page 99, the collector hurried up the cellar steps.

"It's the page from Barber's History of New York that was missing from the copy that young fellow owned," he muttered. "If I can only come across him I'll sell it to him for five dollars at least. Let's see, what's this his name was? Upon me soul, I forgot to ask him. No matter, mebbe I'll run across him some of these days."

Owning the whole volume, as he did, Mr. Gillespie had no more use for page 99 than a cart has for an extra wheel.

He knew it was rare, therefore he bought it.

If he had never heard of Fred Maynard and his missing page, he would have bought it just the same.

Thus through the whim of a crazy collector, page 99 left its snug harbor in Michael Moran's cellar and started off on its travels again.

Now, Mr. Gillespie had a failing, and a very serious one.

He loved whisky quite as fondly as he loved old books.

Having obtained so valuable a prize as an original Moore, he thought it necessary to call upon a certain friend of his—also a collector—to exhibit his treasure forthwith.

This friend kept a saloon in Oliver street just above Cherry—the last place in the world where one would expect to run across a book collector, yet Mr. Gillespie's saloon-keeping friend had almost as fine a collection as himself.

During the examination of the original Moore, which consumed at least three hours, the whisky bottle passed freely in the saloon-keeper's little back room.

As a result, when Mr. Gillespie started away at something after ten o'clock, he was slightly unsteady about the legs.

He seemed possessed also of a strange desire to sing some of the melodies of the original Moore, as he went staggering up the street.

This attracted the attention of a number of corner loafers who were gathered about a grocer's coal-box.

Being of the sort that see in every drunken man late at night their legitimate prey, the corner loafers waited until the

singer had passed them a step or two, then sprang suddenly upon him and knocked him down.

"Help! Help!" yelled Mr. Gillespie, suddenly ceasing to sing the melodies of the original Moore.

"Go for his pouch, Jimmy. Clap your hand over his potato-trap, Yellow!" were the hurried whispers between the young highwaymen. "Pull his prop, you nypper (cut purse), I hear some one piping us now."

Now a pouch is a pocket, and a prop a breastpin, in the lingo of thieves.

In an instant the pockets of Mr. Gillespie were emptied of their contents, his diamond scarf-pin pulled from its fastening, his watch from its chain, and the thieves went bounding away just as two men, attracted by the disturbance, came running up the street.

They didn't take the original Moore, having no idea of its value.

Page 99, pulled from the collector's pocket among other things, was dropped upon the sidewalk, where it lay as the thieves vanished around the corner with the speed of the wind.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LOSS OF THE BOOK

"There he goes!" cried Mr. Rushlow, staring off on the bay at the receding boat. "There goes Carter Green! He's the rower nearest the bow!"

"And the other is my mysterious old man," added Fred Maynard, in a tone of deep perplexity. "I declare I can't see through this at all."

"But you can see that young scoundrel in the boat?"

"Certain'ly I see him, but in this light I wouldn't want to swear that it is Carter Green."

"I would, though. I tell you, Fred Maynard, you are as much interested in the capture of Carter Green as I am, if you only knew it. In no other way can your name be cleared before the world. Have you got a boat?"

"Of course not. I only came to this house to-night for the first time in years."

"But there may be one on the premises. Possibly inside that little boat-house down close to the shore. I'm going to see."

Mr. Rushlow, with long strides, ran down the steep, rocky bank which overhung the bay.

Here a tumble-down boat-house stood, the door of which proved to be locked.

By the time Fred had reached the foot of the descent the detective had kicked in the door of the boat-house with his foot, and was flashing his dark-lantern inside.

"Here is a boat!" he exclaimed, joyfully. "Lend me a hand, young fellow, and help to bail it out."

A boat it was certainly, but at the same time an exceedingly dubious-looking affair.

Nothing more nor less than an aged skiff, filled with water to the very edge.

Shooting one hasty glance out upon the bay, and seeing that the boat rowed by the fugitives was heading down the Sound, Mr. Rushlow, with the assistance of Fred, dragged the skiff out of the boat-house and turned it bottom upward on the beach.

A pair of old oars were also discovered, which the detective seized eagerly. Then, pushing the skiff down into the water, he threw upon the stern seat the book which he had held in his hand until now, and immediately leaped in himself.

"Come, are you going with me?" he exclaimed. "If we are spry we may overtake them yet."

"Certainly, if you wish it," was Fred's instant reply. "I want you to understand that I'm as much interested in this matter as you are, Mr. Rushlow. Hold on a second. We'll want something to bail her with, I suppose."

An old wash-basin found in the boat-house supplied this want.

In another instant the skiff shot out from the shore.

It began to fill immediately.

Instead of being able to assist Mr. Rushlow at the oars, Fred had all he could do to work the wash-basin and keep the wretched craft afloat.

They had pulled out beyond the point which marked the limits of the little bay, when it began to grow more and more evident that instead of Fred's being able to master the water, the water was presently going to master him.

"Look here, this won't do!" he exclaimed. "It's all very well to talk about catching Carter Green and that old Jack-in-the-box I saw in the cellar, but how about drowning? I don't see anything very pleasant in that."

"Nor I," replied Mr. Rushlow, disappointedly. "I'm afraid we've got to give it up."

"And go back?"

"I don't see what else can be done. I suppose you can't bail any faster?"

"If you think you can, you'd better try."

"No, no. If we attempt to change places that would settle it—we'd sink this old tub sure."

He shot a glance behind him.

The other boat was moving leisurely, the distance between them increasing at every stroke.

With a muttered exclamation of disappointment, Mr. Rushlow turned the skiff about and headed toward the shore.

Fred, of course, continued to ply the wash-basin, pouring the water over the side of the boat at a point between the middle seat and the stern.

In doing this considerable water was splashed upon the paper inclosing the book stolen from Mr. McCrillis' office by Carter Green.

"Look here, I'm afraid I'm wetting your parcel," exclaimed Fred, and stopping his work for the instant, he picked up the book with the intention of moving it further out of the way.

The paper had become wetter than he thought and the book slipped through his hands like an eel, going overboard with a sudden splash.

Fred gave vent to a sharp exclamation.

He had caught a glimpse of the book as it slipped from his grasp and had recognized it on the instant, both from its peculiar cover and the little knobs on the sides.

"My book? No, it cannot be. Yet it looked amazingly like it, though. Dear me, I hope there's no great harm done."

"You've managed to lose the book, that's the harm," said Mr. Rushlow, in a tone of vexation. "What do you mean by its being yours?"

"It looked like a book belonging to me which I left in the office of Mr. McCrillis, the lawyer."

"You left a book in the office of Mr. McCrillis?"

"Yes. It was an old book of great value. It looked precisely like that."

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Mr. Rushlow, as he ran the boat up on the shore. "You seem to be mixed up in this affair at every turn. That book came out of Mr. McCrillis' office. It was stolen from his bookcase early this evening by Carter Green."

He could not find words to portray his feelings when Mr. Rushlow proceeded to explain.

Whatever secret Barber's Historical Description of New York city might have had for him, all chance of discovering it now seemed hopelessly lost.

First, page 99; then the entire book.

The fates were certainly against him.

For the next half hour Fred stood on the shore of Fisher's Bay in the moonlight talking over with the detective the whole affair.

"Look here, there's something very mysterious in this," said Mr. Rushlow, "and unless I am greatly mistaken, I see the hand of Carter Green in it all."

"You think it was he who tore page 99 out of the book?"

"Who else could have done it? He had every opportunity. You see, he had already robbed his employers, and must have known that the theft would be speedily discovered. It's my opinion that he tore out page 99 when Mr. Endicott sent him into the vault to get the book."

"But what could have been his motive?"

"Motive! Surely he had motive enough. You are engaged to marry his sister, ain't you? You see, I haven't forgotten that little episode in the house in Harlem, when you, with praiseworthy but mistaken generosity, pretended to be Carter Green."

"Well, suppose I am engaged to his sister; what then?"

"Of course you told your intended about this mysterious will of your grandfather's, and about the old book?"

"Oh, Carter knew all about it, if that's what you're driving at."

"Told him yourself, I suppose?"

"Yes," answered Fred, looking rather foolish. "I told him myself."

"That shows the folly of talking about one's private affairs. You knew Carter Green's character?"

"I knew he drank and gambled—I didn't suppose him to be a thief."

"One vice is apt to grow out of another, young man. You can never tell how far a person has allowed himself to go."

"Well, I suppose I've been a fool," was the moody reply, "but it's all over now; page 99 is gone, and so is the book. I've got this house, and I guess that's all, out of my grandfather's estate I will ever get."

Mr. Rushlow, instead of replying, took him by the arm and led him up the bank, pausing before the little mound in the garden into which the singular old man had so mysteriously disappeared.

"See here, Fred Maynard," he said, "my business is to deal with mystery; do you know that yours is the most mysterious case I ever met in my life? I'm becoming interested in it—I am, indeed."

"It's interesting to me to have the hopes or wealth which I have entertained for years suddenly dashed to the earth."

"Suppose I succeed in unearthing this treasure? What you tell me of the reading of page 99 in that copy of Barber which you consulted at Mr. Gillespie's, leads me to believe that your grandfather discovered some means of gaining access to that sunken treasure-ship, the Black Warrior. Surely his secret must have been of some importance or he would not have taken the pains to conceal it that he did."

"You are welcome to try your hand at it, but I haven't a cent of money, you may as well understand that at the start."

"I don't want your money. If we find a treasure, you can be liberal—I'll ask no more."

"All right. I shall be more than glad of your assistance."

"You put yourself entirely in my hands?"

"Entirely."

"Good. Now, answer me a question or two."

"As many as you please."

CHAPTER XII.

THE IRON DOOR.

To say that our hero was disgusted, don't begin to express his state of mind.

"You are certain that you have known nothing of Carter Green's movements since that night he jumped out the window?"

"I'm ready to swear it."

"Nor his sister either?"

"I don't think so. If she did know, she didn't tell me."

"Which she naturally would have done under the circumstances. Still, you can't tell much about women. She may have known where he was all along."

"I doubt it. I know her thoroughly."

"Well, let that pass," said Mr. Rushlow, observing that Fred's last reply was slightly heated. "Now, I suppose you agree with me in thinking that if Carter Green did actually tear page 99 out of the book, that accounts for his coming to this place."

"I suppose so. He probably learned the secret of my grandfather's wealth."

"Precisely. And that was just what brought him here—what made him go to the trouble that it must have been to him to get a false key to Mr. McCrillis' office and steal that book."

"Then you don't think——"

"That page 99 revealed the whole secret? No, I'm sure that it did not. The book holds the secret yet. There's one consolation—it's safe from Carter Green."

"Not much consolation in that."

"There would be to me. Now to get down to business. You have described that strange old man to me very accurately. This, I suppose, is the mound into which you saw him disappear?"

"That's the very spot," answered Fred. "If you can explain that part of the business it will be more than I think you can do."

"We'll see about that," replied Mr. Rushlow, producing his dark lantern and directing its rays toward the mound. "Now then, how came this thing here?"

"Why, when I first looked at it," returned Fred, "it seemed to me that I had never seen it before, but I now remember that there used to be a little summer house on top of it overlooking the bay, with steps leading up to the door. The structure seems to have completely disappeared, and the mound become rounded off."

"Then the mound has been here for a long period?"

"Since my grandfather's time—perhaps before."

"Good; now let us examine it. Either your little old man was a ghost—something I don't believe in—or there's an opening of some sort into this hill, communicating with the cellar perhaps."

Mr. Rushlow moved about the mound flashing the rays of his lantern here and there.

The mound was covered with grass, dry in some places, no part of its surface presenting an appearance materially different from the rest.

"Don't see anything suspicious here," muttered the detective. "Suppose you climb up to the top, Fred—I may as well call you by your first name, seeing that it comes the handiest—and try what you can discover there."

"Shall I take the lantern?"

"If you like."

Receiving the lantern from the hands of Mr. Rushlow, Fred began the ascent.

He had scarcely climbed three steps, when he suddenly sank out of sight, lantern and all, before the detective's astonished eyes.

"Hello!" cried Mr. Rushlow, springing forward. "What the mischief is the matter now?"

At the same instant Fred Maynard's head appeared out of the side of the mound, a portion of which, about three feet

square and covered with dry grass, rising up as though pressed from within.

"I've found it!"

"By George! I should say you had!" exclaimed the detective. "Are you hurt in any way?"

"Not at all. There is some sort of a spring trap-door here—I trod on it and tumbled in."

"Mysterious disappearance of little old man and Carter Green accounted for," said Mr. Rushlow, laconically. "Let's see how this thing works."

The thing worked with a spring on the inside.

It was a stout oaken trap-door, to which dry grass had been stuck in some manner, completely concealing it from the outside.

By this time Fred had scrambled out, and pulling up the trap-door placed a stone against it, to prevent its flying back into place.

"I dropped the lantern down there somewhere," he said, looking down into the opening. "I suspect the shock put it out."

"We'll soon see about that. Here, I'm going in."

And without the slightest hesitation, Mr. Rushlow dropped into the opening.

His feet struck bottom, leaving his head not more than six inches below the trap.

The lantern was soon found and relighted, and Fred followed him into the mound.

The mound was entirely hollow, the sides being boarded up with some sort of hard wood.

On the floor of the apartment thus formed were pick-axes, spades and shovels, many of them broken, all showing signs of hard usage, and evidently very old.

There were two doors to this underground chamber beside the trap above them, one opening in the direction of the house, the other leading toward the bay.

"So much for page 99," muttered Mr. Rushlow. "In no other way could Carter Green and his ghost-playing companion—who, by the way, I think I could name if I tried—have discovered the secret of this place. How much more they have discovered one can only guess. I congratulate you, Fred Maynard. We are on the track of the treasure at last."

Of course to open the two doors and see where they led to, was the next thing on the programme.

They chose the left-hand door—the one leading toward the old mansion—first.

As might have been expected, it connected with an underground passage leading into the cellar:

Entrance being had through the back of the old wardrobe, by means of a trap, similar to the one in the mound.

Without wasting time, Fred Maynard and the detective returned to the underground chamber again.

The right-hand door was now tried.

It opened without difficulty, revealing a narrow passage on the other side.

Filled with eager expectation, Fred followed Mr. Rushlow into the passage.

It was boarded up on the top and sides to keep the earth from encroaching upon it.

For the distance of perhaps a hundred feet, they continued to advance, when further progress was suddenly barred by a large iron door directly across their path.

CHAPTER XIII.

TWO BAD EGGS.

If there ever was a thoroughly bad egg—metaphorically speaking—that egg was Carter Green.

If there ever was another it was Gilbert Vose.

It was doubtful which was the leader.

We are inclined to believe that each was as ready as the other to lead or be led into anything mean or bad.

Now Mr. Rushlow was quite right in fancying that he saw Carter Green in the boat.

It was Carter Green, and, what was more, his companion, the little old man in military dress was Gilbert Vose.

They watched the operations of the detective and Fred Maynard narrowly.

Saw them embark in the leaky skiff, and, a few moments later on, turn back again.

Of course the distance was too great and the light too uncertain to permit them to see the accident which happened to Barber's Historical Description of the City of New York.

No sooner had the pursuing skiff turned back toward the shore than the "old man" threw off his great beard, cocked hat and wig.

Stowing these carefully away in a canvas bag which he took from beneath the stern seat of the boat, he added to them the antiquated military coat which he wore, donning a well-worn cutaway and a faded brown derby hat instead.

"That ends the masquerading for one night," he remarked as he restored the bag to the place beneath the seat. "Say, Cart, can you see anything of them fellows now?"

"No, I can't," replied Carter Green, resting on his oars and peering ahead of him; "they've gone out of sight around the point."

"You are sure it was Rushlow?"

Of course I am, Gil. Goodness knows where he first began to pipe me. First I seen of him he was coming down the road close behind me. Jerusalem! You can just bet I was scared."

"Yes, you confounded fool, so scared that you dropped that blasted old book after taking all the trouble you did to break into that shyster's office to get it. Never in all my born days did I hear anything so flat."

"Well, I'll bet you wouldn't have stopped to pick it up, with Rushlow at your heels."

"Mebbe not. Great Scott! but didn't you scare the life out of me when you came diving headfirst through the trapdoor! I thought first off it was Fred Maynard—I'll take my affidavit I did."

"I'd like to drown that Fred Maynard," muttered Carter Green, savagely. "He's always thrusting himself in my way. What in thunder does he want to come prowling about that old barn for just as we've got well to work?"

"Great Scott! but it's his own house, ain't it?" returned Vose, lighting a cheap cigar and taking one of the oars from the hands of his companion. "Of course he had to come sooner or later—you know we counted on that."

"Didn't you see him when he first came?"

"No; I was down on the shore, I s'pose. Never seen him until I came out of the mound to get the air. He was looking out of the window when I first caught sight of him—I made one bolt through the trap and into the cellar. Next thing I know'd he was right on top of me there."

"That's what I say. The fellow crosses my path at every turn. First he gets my share of the boodle, and now he interferes with me——"

"When you are trying to put your hand on his," interrupted Vose, sententiously. "Look here, Cart, don't you be a fool. Fred Maynard never did nothin' to you."

"Yes, he did. He might have held on to that money."

"That wasn't to be expected. Besides, 'twouldn't have made no difference if he had. You an' me would have blown the whole business into the air and bunk out in Chicago. They'd have let us out of every jail as it was."

For a few moments the two young scoundrels continued to pull lightly. At last Carter Green spoke again.

"What are we going to do, Gil?"

"Blest if I know. I suppose now the book is lost and 'the detectives onto us; we'll have to give the treasure business up."

"Well, there's one consolation. If Fred Maynard does get hold of the book, never having seen page 99, he won't be able to find out the secret it contains."

"You ought to have looked into it while you had a chance, Cart."

"How could I? I didn't know who was watching. As it turned out, like enough Rushlow was piping me all the time."

"That's so. But we must have money. I haven't got a blamed cent. Neither have you."

"Yes, we must have money, Gil. I don't give up all idea of finding that sunken treasure ship yet; but we must have money if we're going to do anything at all. If we could only get that meddling detective out of the way I should feel comparatively safe."

"Can't you propose something, Cart?"

"I have thought of one thing," replied Green, slowly. "It's a mean thing to do, but when a feller is in as tight a fix as I am, why——"

"Well, what is it? Spit it right out."

"My sister has money; she has more than five hundred dollars laid up in the bank that she has saved from her music scholars."

"You don't say so! It's the very thing. Can't you see the old lady and work on her sympathies? Perhaps she could persuade your sister to let you have some of it. You might promise to reform, you know."

Oh! the meanness—the despicable meanness of the plan!

To deprive Bessie Green of her hard-earned dollars!

It showed the true character of the fellow more fully than anything else he had ever said or done.

"It's no use to talk to my mother," he said. "She'd never hear to anything of the sort. If I could only manage to strike my sister alone, it might be worked. All I'd have to do is to promise to reform, as you say, and I could get anything out of her I like."

"Well, you'd better try it on, then. With five hundred dollars we might do wonders. I've got a scheme in my head for bucking the faro bank which is bound to work. All we want is money to try it on. Anyway, I'm not going to be hunted by that man Rushlow any longer if I can help it."

The next half hour was spent in discussing the scheme of Mr. Vose to break the faro bank, and ways and means to wheedle money from poor Bessie Green.

By this time the boat had entered the Harlem River, and making fast to a pile beneath one of the many low saloons which cluster about the bridge, the two young scamps went ashore.

"You wait here by this lumber pile, Gil," whispered Carter Green. "I'm going up to the house to see what can be done. Bessie sleeps in the front room. I intend to climb up over the piazza. If I can wake her up without making a disturbance and get a chance to talk to her, I shall be able to get the money fast enough."

CHAPTER XIV.

SINGULAR CONDUCT OF BESSIE GREEN.

"You won't be long gone?"

"No, not over half an hour."

"See that you don't make it any longer. If we are going to start on the hunt for Carter Green through the slums to-night, we want to get at it before eight o'clock."

"Where shall I meet you?"

"I'll be waiting here on this corner. Now hurry back as fast as you can."

And Fred Maynard, leaving Mr. Rushlow standing on the corner of Third avenue and the Harlem street on which the humble home of the Green family was situated, hurried away with that brisk step which indicates a man with plenty of business on his hands.

It was the evening following the singular adventures of Fred Maynard and Mr. Rushlow at the old mansion in New Rochelle.

With the discovery of the iron door the adventures of the night came to a sudden end.

They could not open the door, try as they would.

It seemed to have been in some mysterious way fastened on the inside.

After repeated attempts they decided to give it up, and, as it was now long after midnight, retire to the old mansion and to bed.

The next morning they tried their hand at the door again, but with an equal want of success.

They were not able to open it, neither could they discover any traces of the end of the secret passage on the shore of the bay.

One of the first things Fred did was to push out on the bay in the leaky skiff and endeavor to locate the point where the old book had gone down.

In this he met with but little success, no trace of the book being found.

"I've got business to attend to in the city," said Mr. Rushlow, at length. "What we want to do first of all is to catch Carter Green and that fellow Vose. That they have been at work here on some more substantial information than we possess is evident. If you will join me this evening at Harlem bridge we'll start on a regular hunt for them. I feel quite certain of success."

"But suppose they come back here while we are away?"

"It is unlikely. Still, to guard against such a contingency, I'll send one of my men up here to watch to-night. You needn't leave until he arrives."

Thus it had been arranged.

When the detective arrived at the mansion, which was after six o'clock, Fred left him in charge, and hurrying to the station, took the first train for Harlem, meeting Mr. Rushlow, as arranged, at the bridge.

Now, being in Harlem, Fred naturally desired to improve the opportunity to speak a word with Bessie Green.

Mr. Rushlow made no objection to this.

On the contrary, he favored it, charging Fred to use his best efforts to learn if Bessie knew where her brother was to be found.

"I'll bet five dollars the girl knows all about him," muttered Mr. Rushlow, as he watched Fred's manly form disappear in the distance. "I know women—at least I ought to—they're as soft-hearted as kittens, and I have no sort of idea this one is any different from the rest."

Fred had just come in sight of the house, when he suddenly saw Bessie descend the steps and turn toward Third avenue walking rapidly and with an agitated air.

He was at her side in an instant, extending his hand.

"Fred, how you startled me!"

"As though I could ever startle you, dearest? Why, you are ever in my thoughts, you could not startle me if you were to suddenly rise from the bowels of the earth."

And so they went on, the detective listening to this love speech with the never-failing Fred-like unshaken right of a poet.

Instead, she exhibited signs of impatience. It was plain to see that something was troubling her, and she was fidgeting.

"Were you called to the door, Fred?"

"Yes, for a few moments. I can't stay long, for I——"

"I won't be able to see you to-night."

"Won't be able to see me, Bessie! I've got ever so many things to tell you. Strange events have happened since I last saw you, and——"

"I will listen to them some other time, Fred. I—I've got an important engagement—I've got to run."

"What sort of an engagement, pet?"

"Don't ask me, Fred, for I cannot tell you. Please. I haven't a moment to lose."

"Bessie!"

"Fred!"

"Have you ceased to love me, that you deny me your confidence thus?"

"You know I love you, Fred," was the whispered response, coming in agitated tones. "I do not deny you my confidence, but—but this engagement concerns another—I cannot tell you more."

"Does it concern your brother?"

"It is cruel in you to ask me, Fred."

"It is for your own sake, dearest. If you have any knowledge of Carter or his whereabouts, I beg you will not conceal it from me."

Tears sprang to the girl's eyes.

"I—I shall not say another word, Fred," she said, in a low, constrained voice. "If you have any love for me—any regard for my feelings, you will instantly release your hold on my hand and let me go."

She was off on the instant.

Before Fred could utter another syllable she had turned from him and hurried down the street.

Her lover followed more leisurely.

He was deeply piqued at the strange conduct of his intended.

Now he would not have stopped her if he could.

Still he followed her with his eye, and saw her ascend the stairs leading up to the elevated railway station.

When the next downtown train left the station, without any intent to spy upon her movements, Fred, in company with Mr. Rushlow, found himself seated in the same car with Bessie Green.

She did not see him, as her position was at one end of the car, his at the other. Moreover, her head was turned from him and a thick veil pulled down over her eyes.

Where was she going?

To meet her brother?

It certainly had that appearance.

Fred confided his suspicions to Mr. Rushlow, who thought so too.

"We'll have to follow her," said the detective. "Take my word for it, she'll lead us to Carter Green."

"But she'll never forgive me."

"Do you want your intended wife to be hunting a couple of thieves alone at night perhaps in the very worst part of New York?"

It was an unanswerable argument.

Bessie Green left the train at Chatham square, going out of the car by the rear door.

Passing out by the front door, Fred and the detective were too.

"There she goes," whispered Mr. Rushlow, as Bessie, after a moment's hesitation, turned down Catherine street. "Now then, to find out where her brother hangs out."

Devoutly Fred wished that he was rid of the detective.

He dreaded beyond all things to be exposed as a spy.

But he could not help it. He had to follow her. He had to find out where her brother hangs out. He had to find out where her brother hangs out.

This was simply impossible.

There was nothing for it but to keep pace with the detective, and follow the other side of the street.

CHAPTER XV.

PAGE 99 FALLS INTO THE HANDS OF ITS RIGHTFUL OWNER AT LAST.

Down Catherine street to Cherry, along Cherry one block to a house next adjoining the corner of Oliver, Bessie Green led Fred Maynard and Mr. Rushlow.

Here she paused, and in a hesitating manner cast a frightened look about her, then suddenly entered the hall door of the dirty tenement house, on the ground floor of which was a saloon.

From his position on the corner of Catherine street Fred saw this action with sinking heart.

Would Mr. Rushlow instantly enter the house and arrest Carter Green?

If such proved to be his intention, Fred felt that all hope of ever making Bessie his wife might as well be abandoned at once.

He knew her thoroughly.

She would never forgive him.

Suspicious that he had put the detective on her-track would be instantly aroused.

Beside, Fred did not feel at all certain that she had not seen them on the elevated train.

Mr. Rushlow's next remark, therefore, brought to him immense relief.

"That place! I know it well. If that's where Carter Green and Vose are in hiding, they cannot escape us. There is no rear exit to that house—they've got to come out by the front door. Out of consideration for your feelings, Fred, we will wait until Miss Green has transacted her business before we begin with ours."

Fred seized the detective's hand and wrung it warmly.

"You are delaying on my account, and I want you to understand that I appreciate it," he said. "But where shall we go? It will not do for us to be seen; at the same time I want to be sure to see Bessie when she comes out."

"I can easily arrange that," replied Mr. Rushlow. "You see I was a police detective in this very precinct once upon a time. Come, let me go into that saloon directly opposite the house while you wait on the corner and watch until you hear from me. Cregan, the man who keeps it, will fix things to suit us, I am sure."

Now Cregan's "Sailor's Return" was as low a sailor's dance-house as Cherry street could produce.

Had the proprietor been a French dancing-master, instead of an Irish saloon keeper, he could not have received Mr. Rushlow with more politeness than he did.

Of course, the detective did not admit the man further into his confidence than to tell him that he wanted to watch certain parties in the opposite tenement—for what purpose he did not say.

Inasmuch as the saloon keeper on the ground floor of the tenement was a business rival of Cregan's, he had no objection to this, and accordingly showed the detective to a little room immediately above the saloon, which commanded a full view of the street.

While these negotiations were in progress Fred maintained a watch at the corner of Oliver street.

At no time was the house removed from the gaze of one of them, Mr. Rushlow, when he had taken his position at the window, dispatching one of the Cregan's waiters to tell Fred to come up.

"You have seen nothing suspicious?" was his first inquiry, when they found themselves alone.

"Not a thing."

"Miss Green has not come down?"

"No."

"Then we'll stay here until she does. I'm acting unprofessionally and making a mistake, but, as I said before, I don't want to get you into trouble with your girl."

And they began to watch.

Minute after minute passed until a full half hour was gone, and yet nothing was seen of Bessie Green.

Meanwhile a villanous old piano and a cracked cornet could be heard droning out waltzes and polkas in the saloon below them, mingled with the sound of shuffling feet.

Never in his life had Fred Maynard been in a situation so trying before, and he shuddered at the very thought of Bessie penetrating alone in a locality so vile.

"It is very strange that she don't come," remarked Mr. Rushlow at last. "If I didn't know that the house backed up against a factory wall on Water street, I should almost be inclined to think she had gone out by some other way. You are sure you did not miss her while I was talking with Cregan?"

"Positive," replied Fred. "My eyes never left that door for an instant."

"Nor mine after I sent the waiter to tell you to come up. It is very strange that she does not come."

Now, of course Mr. Rushlow's anxiety had no reassuring effect upon Fred Maynard.

They could see people moving about behind the windows of the tenement; but though they scanned each face and form closely, neither Carter Green nor his sister appeared among any of these.

"Look here, Mr. Rushlow, I can't stand this any longer," exclaimed Fred, as a clock in the room rang out the hour of nine. "Let the result be what it may to me, we must go over there and see what has become of Bessie. I shall go crazy if I stay here."

"About time," replied the detective, drily. "I've been waiting for you to come to that conclusion for the last half hour. Come on. We'll soon find out what is going on in that house."

They hurried downstairs and across the street.

"If it were only Carter Green and his rascally companion, I should begin to think they might have tried the roof," whispered Mr. Rushlow, as they ascended the dark stairway. "But of course Miss Bessie would have no motive to adopt such a course. They must be here still. We are sure to find them. We'll search the old rookery from cellar to roof before we give it up."

It was an hour before Fred Maynard found himself on the corner of Cherry and Oliver streets once more.

He was now in a state of mind bordering on distraction.

Bessie Green had not been found.

And this notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Rushlow had literally fulfilled his promise.

They had searched the tenement from cellar to roof, and the house adjoining as well.

No one had seen Bessie. No trace of either Carter Green or Gil Vose could be found.

Many knew the detective, and lent their aid.

The only result was to arouse the excitement of the occupants of the tenements to the highest pitch.

"You needn't feel so worried," said Mr. Rushlow, when they found themselves forced to abandon the search at last. "The girl has more shrewdness than I gave her credit for. She knew we were on her track all along, and has given us the slip."

"I can't believe it. This part of the city is as strange to Bessie as though it was a thousand miles away."

"Possibly," replied the detective, shrugging his shoulders. "You can't tell much about women. You remember what I

said to you in the first place? It's my belief that she has seen her brother and is home by this time. Come, there's no use in worrying about it. Let us go up to Chatham square, I want to see a certain saloon keeper of my acquaintance. I shouldn't be surprised if he could put us on the track of Carter Green."

They started up Oliver street together, walking on the right-hand side.

Now it happened at the same time that Mr. Gillespie was staggering along at a short distance ahead of them, warbling the melodies of the original Moore.

Both Fred and the detective saw the man without paying any particular attention to him, until he was suddenly attacked by the young highwaymen about the grocer's coal-box, in the manner already described.

"Great Heavens! they are robbing that fellow!" exclaimed Mr. Rushlow, as the cry for help from the unfortunate antiquarian broke upon the still night air.

Both he and Fred sprang toward the scene of action on the run.

They arrived too late to prevent the rifling of his pockets, as has been seen.

"Are you hurt?" asked Mr. Rushlow—satisfied that he was powerless to overtake the thieves—as he assisted the discomfited book collector to rise.

Meanwhile Fred, catching sight of something upon the sidewalk which he thought for the instant might be money, had stooped down to pick it up.

Instead of a greenback it proved to be the leaf of an old book, neatly folded in such a manner as to expose a little wood cut to view.

Judge of his astonishment upon discovering by the heading that the book from which the leaf had been torn was none other than that rare work, Barber's Historical Description of the City of New York.

Of his still greater amazement at beholding on the corner of the printed page the figures 99.

CHAPTER XVI.

A CONTEMPTIBLE FELLOW.

"I want to see Mr. Thompson."

"Shure an' there's no Thompson livin' here. Ye might try the top flure, there was a family what moved in there lately—let me see, what's this their name was——"

"I want to see Mr. Thompson," repeated Bessie Green, apparently oblivious to what was being said.

Bessie had reached the third landing in the Cherry street tenement which she had been seen to enter by Fred Maynard and Mr. Rushlow.

In response to her gentle knock on the door nearest to the head of the stairs a stout, red-faced, unkempt female presently appeared, and the above noted conversation ensued.

"An' ain't I jist after tellin' yez that no Mr. Thompson lives here?" sputtered the woman, as Bessie, in a gentle voice, asked the question for the second time. "Niver did I see sich impudence in all me born days! I tell you once and for all, ma'am, there's no Thompson livin' here."

Now one would naturally think this enough for any person enough to send them on the right about face at once.

Not so with Bessie Green.

In spite of the mingled sensations of fear and repulsion that a young lady so carefully bred would naturally feel at the vile surroundings amid which she now found herself, Bessie, in a trembling voice, repeated the question yet the third time exactly as though she had failed to hear the woman's loud and violent speech.

"I want to see Mr. Thompson."

Instantly the manner of the woman changed.

"Hist! young leddy, don't say another wurred. Ye are all right, and know the ropes, I see. Is there any one wid yez?"

She pushed out into the hall and peered over the bannisters nervously.

"I am all alone," whispered Bessie. "My brother told me to come alone and ask for Mr. Thompson three times, no matter what was said."

"Right ye are; 'twas mesilf, Biddy Noon, what suggested it—I make no doubt, miss, that ye are the sister of Carter Green?"

"I am—can I see him?"

"Sartainly ye can, now that I knows you. Ye see, miss, I'm a lone widdy, me man being killed by a hod of bricks fallin' onto him, now goin' on tin years come next emberday, an' it's the snug little boardin' house I keeps for sich of the boys as has to lie shady from the fly cops—walk in, Lord love ye! Walk in, miss; your brother is in the front room now."

"She threw open the door while thus speaking and ushered Bessie into a foul smelling apartment which seemed to be a kitchen, dining and bedroom combined.

Then, carefully securing the outer door behind them, Biddy Noon dusted a chair with her apron, and bidding her visitor be seated, passed into another room.

Trembling with excitement and an overpowering sense of disgust, Bessie waited.

"To think of poor Carter's being obliged to hide in a dreadful place like this," she murmured. "Is there no hope for him? He has sunk very low. Mother is right; to give him too much money is only——"

"This way, miss," said the woman, returning. "Your brother is waiting for you in the front room."

Silently Bessie Green followed her conductor.

She was ushered into a dirty room, showily decorated with paper flowers, tawdry vases upon the mantel, cheap pictures on the wall.

In the middle of the room was a table, by the side of which sat Mr. Gilbert Vose, puffing at a particularly ill-smelling cigar and engaged in idly shuffling a greasy pack of cards.

Carter Green met his sister at the door.

He likewise was smoking, and his face appeared red and swollen.

It was easy to see that he had been drinking heavily—in fact, he was under the influence of liquor even then.

"Hello, Bess! You've kept your promise, I see. By George, you're the kind of sister for a feller to have! Look here, Gil, here's my sister. Bessie, allow me to make you acquainted with my friend, Mr. Vose."

Gil Vose, finding himself thus addressed, staggered to his feet, and with a maudlin politeness offered to shake hands.

"I have nothing to say to Mr. Vose," said Bessie, in a low tone. "Carter, if you have any respect for me you will tell that man to retire. I want to speak with you alone."

"Won't do anything of the sort," was the dogged response. "Gil and I are just like brothers. He knows all my business, Bess, so you needn't be afraid to speak right out before him. Have you brought the cash?"

Tears sprang to the sister's eyes.

"Carter, how can you treat me so?" she murmured. "Don't you know you have broken mother's heart—that you are breaking mine? Oh, brother, if you will only mend your ways, I'll do anything for you. I'll break off my engagement with Fred—I'll go and live with you in some Western city, where——"

"There, there, Bess; don't begin to blubber. I'll reform. I promised you that last night. Have you brought the cash?"

"But your promises are not kept. You promised me last night that you would never touch liquor. Carter, you have been drinking again."

"I haven't."

"Yes, you have. I can see it in your face. What would our poor father say if he only knew——"

"Now drop that, sis. Let the old man rest in peace. Have you brought the cash?—that's what I want to know."

"I'll talk about that matter when we are alone, Carter, and not before."

"Look, a-here, if I'm in the way I'll just get out of hearing," interrupted Vose, throwing down the cards and stepping to the window. "Fire ahead now, Bessie. I'll be deaf as a post to all that's said."

"He can't go, there's no other place," whispered Carter. "The detectives are on our track, and we have to be very careful. Now, then, Bess, once for all, have you brought the cash?"

"Here are ten dollars, brother. When it's gone I'll give you more if you need it."

"Ten dollars! What in thunder do you suppose that amounts to? It won't keep me a week. I want the five hundred you've got in the savings bank if I'm going to begin life again."

"I can't give it to you until I'm satisfied you really mean to reform, Carter."

"But how am I going to reform without money, I'd like to know? It's mean in you not to be willing to trust me, Bess. I—I intend to quit drinking and to turn over a new leaf, but I must have money to begin on—don't you see?"

He had taken the ten dollars and thrust it into his pocket even while begging for more.

"Will you do as I suggest?" asked Bessie, pleadingly. "Will you turn your back on your evil companions and go with me to some Western city where you can begin life again?"

"I don't want to go West. I was out there and don't like it—I can do better in New York."

"What can you do with the detectives constantly watching you?"

"Oh, I'll soon manage to shake them off. I've got friends to help me; besides, I have a plan."

"What is it?"

"No matter, Bess, it's a good one. Now come like a good sister and write me an order for that money you have in the bank."

"I can't do it, Carter. I cannot trust you."

"But you must—I must have it."

"Brother, I will not give it to you until you give me undoubted evidence of the genuineness of your professions of reform."

The face of Carter Green grew dark.

"You won't?"

"No, I won't. I am going now. I——"

"Hist! Hist!" exclaimed Vose, suddenly drawing back from the window. "Rushlow, the detective, is watching this house from Cregan's place across the street."

Carter Green sprang toward the window.

"Where is he?" he whispered.

"There—don't you see him? Look here, Cart, we've got to get out of this. Have you got the money?"

"No, confound her! She won't give it to me."

"Then I'd make her. Suppose we——"

Here Gil Vose suffered his voice to drop into a whisper so low that it could scarce be heard.

To his proposition, whatever it might have been, Carter Green nodded an emphatic assent.

"See here, Bessie!" he exclaimed, in a despairing tone. "The detectives are on my track again. If you attempt to leave this house they will certainly see you. Sister, you must stand by me, or I'm hooked for Sing Sing sure."

"What can I do?" whispered Bessie, in confusion.

"Come with us. We will take you here by way of the river in a boat that I've got at the foot of the street. For Heaven's sake don't refuse me. Come, we will go at once."

As he spoke Carter Green grasped his sister's arm and hurried her through a side door opened by Vose from behind a curtain which hung against the wall.

The door led into the tenement adjoining.

It was closed by Gil Vose, while Carter Green, whispering words of assurance to his sister, hurried her down a flight of dirty stairs, gaining Oliver street by way of a narrow alley running between the great factory and the house they had just left.

"Carter, let me go," whispered Bessie, now thoroughly frightened.

"No, no. The detectives will certainly see you."

"But what harm can it do you? You are free now and can escape if you choose."

"You don't understand the case, Bessie. I will explain when we get in the boat."

And, heedless of all remonstrances, Carter Green hurried the bewildered girl across South street down upon a pier, and forced rather than asked her into a small boat which lay fastened by a rope to one of the spiles.

"We'll land you at Grand street, sis," he whispered, as Vose pushed off from the pier. "You can take the cars directly home from there, you know. Trust me, Bess. I'd do more than this to save you from such a fate as hangs over my head, and I know you'll do as much for me."

Poor Bessie!

She still trusted him!

A man would have known better, would have seen through his ridiculous plan, but she was a woman and a sister, and believed every word he said.

CHAPTER XVII.

FOUND IN A FISH BASKET.

"Fish! Fish! Fresh fish! Here ye are, porgies! haddock! herrings! All kinds!"

It was South street and the Catherine Market on a Saturday night.

A busy crowd pressed about the hucksters' wagons, whose flaring torches illuminated the scene with an unnatural light. Men and women, boys and girls—some with baskets, some without—all intent upon procuring at the cheapest rates provisions for the day of rest to come.

"Funny place this," remarked Mr. Rushlow, the detective, as he stood with Fred Maynard on the lower corner of Catherine street and South, looking toward the pressing throng.

"It may be—I suppose it is. I'm so worried about Miss Green that I can think of nothing else."

Worried!

He looked it.

The face of Fred Maynard had grown ashen since we last saw him.

He looked like a man about to enter upon a fit of illness—as though he had not known sleep for a week.

No wonder.

It was Thursday night when Bessie Green entered the Cherry street tenement.

It is Saturday now, and since that time she had not returned to her home, where her mother remained in a state bordering on insanity; nor had the detectives, who had been doing their best, been able to shed any light upon her fate.

As for Fred he had rested neither night nor day.

In company with Mr. Rushlow he had spent all of Friday in a vain search for the girl he loved. Now on Saturday night he was at it again.

Page 99 so strangely restored to his possession had been well-nigh forgotten.

Matters of more interest to him than a thousand treasures filled the young man's mind.

And yet page 99 had brought with it a startling revelation.

Startling as it was, Fred Maynard had not even discovered it until about an hour previous to his encounter with Mr. Rushlow on this particular evening and place.

He had been too deeply occupied.

Of course he had appropriated the missing page without consulting the inebriated Mr. Gillespie; and he had done so without even speaking of his find to Mr. Rushlow.

At the time of their encounter, the possessor of the original Moore had been in no condition to consult about anything, the detective too busy for Fred to speak with him.

In fact, the man's condition was so utterly demoralized that Mr. Rushlow was obliged to put him into the charge of a policeman at once.

Thus Fred had thrust page 99 into his pocket, where, until he had chanced to think of it while eating his supper in a restaurant now, two evenings later, it had quietly remained.

"Try and keep cool," said Mr. Rushlow, reassuringly. "I'm satisfied that Carter Green is at the bottom of his sister's disappearance. We'll make a thorough search for that young scoundrel to-night. I think your idea that he wishes to extort money from his sister is a correct one. Of course he would not harm her. We shall succeed at last, you may depend."

"I hope so," replied Fred, dejectedly. "This uncertainty is driving me wild."

"I believe you., Look here, Maynard, when you do find that girl do you know what I think?"

"What?"

"That you ought to marry her at once. She needs a protector, and if she is all you say she is, she ought to find one in you. As for the means of support, that will come all right you may depend."

"I intend to. By the way I have something important to tell you, Mr. Rushlow. You will think it strange, but I have been so worried that I never thought of it——"

"Thought of what?"

"I've found page 99."

"What!"

"I found page 99. I picked it up on the sidewalk in Oliver street night before last when we ran across that man who was robbed."

"And never told me!"

"I never even looked at it until to-night. You see I've been almost crazy about Bessie."

"And when you did look at it you found——"

"The missing clue to my grandfather's fortune—that is if we had not lost the book."

"You amaze me! How the mischief you could have that page in your possession two whole days and—but, there—it's no use talking. I never was in love. You are sure it's the page from your book?"

"Certain," replied Fred, drawing the detective close to the lighted window of a cigar store. "See, here it is. There is something written on the bottom in my grandfather's hand which tells why Carter Green went to the trouble to steal the book."

Receiving the time-worn leaf from Fred Maynard's hand, Mr. Rushlow held it up in the light of the cigar store window.

Upon the margin these words were written in faded ink, which the detective read aloud:

"Press the upper right-hand button on the front cover."

That was all, but it was quite enough.

In the old book cover the secret had been hidden.

It was hidden now more effectually than old Cadwallader Maynard had ever intended or dreamed.

"Was there ever anything so provoking?" exclaimed Mr. Rushlow. "To think that, now that we actually have the missing page, the book itself is lost beyond recall!"

"There's no help for it," replied Fred, dejectedly. "The fates are against me, it seems."

"Fate! It is downright carelessness. Young man, you never ought to have trusted that book to the care of Mr. McCrillis. You ought to have taken it yourself."

"I see that now."

"I should think you might."

"I didn't think the old thing was good for anything, with page 99 torn out."

"You had no business to take any chances. But there, I won't scold any more. The book is lost and the clue to the treasure with it. I must say you are punished enough."

"I don't care anything about the treasure if I could only find Bessie," answered Fred, as he folded up the page and returned it to his pocket. "We are wasting time here, Mr. Rushlow. We must renew our search at once. What shall be the first move?"

"I'll tell you. I know a place in Market street where thieves of all sorts hang out—dear me, how the loss of that book provokes me. I can think of nothing else—but, as I was saying, suppose we take a turn in that direction and see if by any chance we can get on the track of Carter Green?"

"Do you think you can make them tell you?" asked Fred, as they moved toward South street.

"Do I think? Why, they'll have to tell me if they know. I'll have the whole gang of them scooped in if they refuse—plague on the crowd around these fish wagons! They are a perfect nuisance and wouldn't be allowed if I had my way."

The crowd was dense, and that was a fact.

So dense indeed that Mr. Rushlow and Fred found themselves pushed unceremoniously up against the wheel of one of the fish peddlers' wagons, where for a moment they were pinned, unable to move.

Now it chanced that the owner of this particular fish wagon was at that moment chatting with a young man who, instead of wishing to buy, was endeavoring to sell the peddler a basket of black fish which he had that afternoon caught up in Long Island Sound.

The negotiation was being carried on in loud tones, directly in front of the wheel against which Mr. Rushlow and Fred now stood, unable to either advance or retreat.

"You can have them for a dollar!" exclaimed the young fisherman, angrily. "It ain't no use in you talkin', boss—I won't take a cent less."

"But they ain't fresh."

"Yes, they are, I hooked every one on 'em myself this afternoon up in the Sound off New Rochelle."

"I'll give you seventy-five cents for the batch."

"Won't take it. Want a dollar."

"Make it eighty-five."

"Won't do it, I tell you. Won't take a blame cent less."

"Here, gimme yer basket," said the peddler, crossly. "I'll fix you some other time."

"Look out there!" cried the boy, as the fishmonger was about to turn the contents of the basket into his wagon. "There's something in the bottom of that basket that belongs to me."

"What is it?"

"A book what I found floatin' in the water. There, now. What did I tell you? You've been and turned it on top of your greasy fish."

It was a book, sure enough, and a very old book at that.

Fred spied it as it fell from the basket on top of the pile of fish in the peddler's wagon.

At a glance he recognized it.

The book was his own lost copy of Anthony Barber's Historical Description of the City of New York.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SECRET OF THE OLD BOOK COVER—A NIGHT VISIT TO THE HOUSE ON THE BAY.

"Keep cool, Fred Maynard."

"I'm trying to keep cool, but I find it hard work. I'm so nervous I can scarcely speak."

"Will you take the matter in hand, or shall I?"

"I—I think I better do it, Mr. Rushlow. You see, it was my grandfather's hand which concealed this secret within the old book cover, by right my hand should open it now after all these years."

The scene was in a little room in a certain cheap hotel within a stone's throw of the Catherine Market—a hotel which would be well known if we chose to mention the name.

Upon making the startling discovery noted at the close of the last chapter, Fred fortunately was able to control his excitement and refrain from any exclamation of surprise.

He immediately directed the attention of Mr. Rushlow to the book, which the young fisherman now pulled angrily from the top of the finny, quaking mass of black fish, porgies and flounders in the peddler's wagon, with imprecations upon his carelessness for not paying closer attention to his warning words.

"What is it?" whispered the detective, as Fred grasped his arm.

"That book! Don't you recognize it? Don't you see what it is?"

"What! You don't mean to intimate that it is the book?"

"But I do, though. I am ready to swear to it."

"Look here, young fellow, let me see that book," exclaimed Mr. Rushlow, pressing forward.

"No! Mind yer own bizness."

"What! You won't let—"

"Yes, I will, boss! Beg yer pardon. How the deuce was I to know you were a detective?"

Mr. Rushlow had exhibited his shield.

"Where did you get this?" he demanded, taking the book from the hands of the young fisherman.

It was Barber's Historical Description of the City of New York, sure enough!

What Fred had seen at a glance Mr. Rushlow, less familiar with the book, now assured himself by opening it at the title page.

"See here, my young friend, this book belongs to me," he exclaimed, without waiting for a reply to his previous question. "Much obliged to you for finding it. Here's a dollar for your pains."

"Say, that's too thin now!" returned the fisherman, holding the dollar in his hand doubtfully. "I found that book floating in the Sound up around New Rochelle."

"Precisely. That's just where I lost it a few nights ago."

"Go on now. Don't be givin' me a kid, boss. 'Tain't yourn, 'n you can't make me believe it is, but if you want it you kin have it, only give me another dollar. If the blamed old thing is worth anything to yer, it ought to be worth that much—that's all I've got to say."

"Here's a dollar," interposed Fred, seeing that the detective was inclined to prolong the discussion.

The second dollar settled it.

At the suggestion of Mr. Rushlow they at once entered the hotel in question, and calling for a room, prepared to in-

vestigate in private whatever secrets the old book cover might contain.

"Get out page 99 again," said the detective. "Let us read the writing carefully, and be sure that we make no mistake."

Fred drew out page 99 and spread it between them on the table.

"Don't it seem strange by what a singular combination of circumstances the old book and the missing page have been brought back into my hands?"

"Strange! Strange!" reiterated Mr. Rushlow. "Why, it's marvelous—that's what it is. It beats anything I ever heard of in my life; but here we have the writing. Now how is this it reads?"

"Press the upper right-hand button on the front cover."

Such was the reading of the words written upon the margin of page 99 by the hand of old Cadwallader Maynard, now these many years in his grave.

Little could that singular individual have imagined under what circumstances his grandson was destined to learn the secret which he had gone to so much pains to conceal.

Fred drew the book toward him with trembling hand.

It was thoroughly water-soaked, even the leather of the binding having begun to swell and to peel off in places from the cover.

The little black knobs were all in position, however, upon seeing which Mr. Rushlow heaved a sigh of relief.

"Come, are you going to try it?" he exclaimed, impatiently.

Without replying Fred closed the book, and turning it right-side up upon the table, pressed the upper right-hand knob.

Nothing transpired.

Again and again he pressed it, but still there was no result.

"Must have got swelled in the water," muttered the detective. "Here, let me try. The cover is certainly hollow. Don't you see how thick it is? That's what made it float."

Pulling the book toward him, Mr. Rushlow produced a jack-knife and with the back struck the knob smartly.

Instantly that portion of the cover within the four knobs flew back, disclosing a hollow space inside.

It was filled with cotton.

Even here was evidence of further caution.

The cotton had evidently been placed in the old book cover to prevent a hollow sound in case any prying person should strike it from the outside.

Ruthlessly the hand of Mr. Rushlow tore it away.

Beneath the cotton lay a folded paper and a key.

"Read," said the detective, passing the former to Fred. "It's your grandfather's dying bequest—it belongs to you."

Fred took the paper and read as follows:

"Open the mound in the garden. The key fits the iron doors. Waste no time removing the earth from the passage, but examine the third stone in the pavement. Strike hard on the iron spike."

* * * * *

When the eleven o'clock train from the Grand Central Depot stopped at New Rochelle that night, among other passengers there alighted a man of some forty years and a youth of twenty-one.

Without an instant's delay they turned their backs on the station and took the road leading toward the old house on the bay.

Of course they were our hero Fred Maynard and Mr. Rushlow.

In spite of Fred's anxiety to spend the whole night in search of Bessie Green he had yielded to Mr. Rushlow's impatience, and after an unsuccessful visit to the thieves' resort in Market street, they had taken the train for New Rochelle.

"We can do nothing more to-night," the detective had said. "Wait until to-morrow, and if it takes every detective in New

York City, I'll find out what has become of Carter Green, and what he has done with the girl."

The fact was, Mr. Rushlow had become excited.

His excitement increased rather than diminished when they again found themselves in the garden beside the old house on the bay and standing close to the mound.

The place seemed utterly deserted.

Even the detective sent up by Mr. Rushlow to watch for Carter Green had departed that morning, it seeming improbable that the young thieves intended to return to the old house, and his presence being required elsewhere.

Through the tall pines the wind sighed drearily. Even the moonlight was wanting now, and dark clouds obscured the sky.

"Here at last!" whispered Mr. Rushlow, impressed by the loneliness of the scene. "Now, then, Fred Maynard, the work of the next half hour is going to tell the story. Shall we make the test?"

"As well now as any time. I have had so many disappointments lately that I shall not be greatly surprised if nothing comes of it after all."

"I don't see how you can say so."

"I speak just as I feel."

"You are getting morbid, young man. Do you suppose your grandfather would have taken all the precautions he did if there had been nothing to hide?"

"He was a curious character, Mr. Rushlow, and did curious things."

"I ain't disposed to deny that. Come, shall we enter the mound?"

"We need a lantern."

"That's true. Suppose you go into the house and get one—but stay; I have my dark-lantern—that will answer the purpose as well as anything else."

Producing his dark-lantern even while speaking, the detective shot its rays over the mound.

"Here's the trap!" he exclaimed. "I'll go first and light you down."

They were within the mound a moment later.

"Now for the passage," whispered Mr. Rushlow. "I'm dying with impatience to get behind that iron door."

Together they advanced along the underground passage, leading off in the direction of the shore.

Of course Mr. Rushlow was ahead, carrying the lantern.

"Hello! What's this?" he breathed, stopping suddenly. "By all that's great and good, the iron door is wide open! Some one has got ahead of us after all."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TREASURE OF THE SUNKEN SHIP.

"Pull in a little nearer to the shore, Gil. Goodness knows who may be watching us, and it won't do to be seen."

"I should say not," growled Mr. Gilbert Vose, as he directed the boat in which he sat plying the oars toward the point which, jutting out into the Sound from the New Rochelle shore, marks the limits of Fisher's Bay.

"That man Rushlow is everywhere. Like the Irishman's flea, when you think you have got him he ain't there."

"It's we that are the fleas, and he the Irishman, I should say, Gil," replied Carter Green, the other occupant of the boat. "How many times is it now that he has almost nipped us?"

"Don't remember. Six or seven, ain't it?"

"Oh, no, not more than three or four; but he'll never catch us if I can help it. I've sworn it, Gil. I'm resolved never to be taken alive."

"Don't talk rubbish. I'd rather serve twenty years at shoe-

making than to kick the bucket. A feller only has one life, and he don't want to lose that. But say, Cart?"

"What is it?"

"Rushlow is bound to take us in the end if we hang around here. We are running a terrible risk in prowling about that old house again, do you know that?"

"It's all right, I tell you. I was up there just at dusk. The detective has gone and there is not a soul around the place."

"We can't be sure of that. If we don't succeed in getting onto the treasure to-night I move we travel South for the winter; that is if you can succeed in bringing that sister of yours to terms."

"She must be brought to terms at any cost," muttered Carter Green. "I thought that one night in the cabin of that old canal-boat would scare her so that she would be willing to give me the money without any further fuss. It seems I was wrong, though. The longer she stays there the more stubborn she gets."

And Carter Green turned, looking gloomily toward an old canal-boat, which, tilted over upon its side, lay half buried in the water, aground upon a shoal at a distance of several hundred yards from the shore.

"Suppose she were to get out of the cabin and holler for help while we're gone?" suggested Vose. "It's the first time both of us have gone off together, you know."

"There's no danger. In the first place, she can't get out, for the door is locked and I have the key in my pocket. Besides, if she did, there's no one to hear."

"She might attract the attention of some passing boat."

"It's unlikely, but we've got to run some risk. This is our last strike for the treasure of the Black Warrior. To-night it's succeed or fail."

"Do you know, Cart," said Mr. Vose, speaking meditatively, "that I'm beginning to doubt the existence of that treasure. How the mischief can an underground passage lead out to a ship at the bottom of the Sound, as you suggested the other day?"

"I don't know, but if I can I propose to find out. I tell you that old duffer, Cadwallader Maynard, had buried money somewhere about the place. I've heard Fred talk about it time and again. That's why I nipped page 99, don't you see? I read it—it told about the Black Warrior and the money on board of her. If I'd only been bright enough to have taken the book and learned the secret of the cover——"

"We'd have known all about it now, Cart, and it wouldn't have been necessary for me to half break my neck falling through that trap-door into the mound."

"By George, that was a lucky mishap!" replied the other. "I could never see how you did it, Gil; but it gave us a clew to the secret all the same. Heavens! How I wish I had only held on to that confounded old book."

By this time they had rounded the point, and were pulling toward the little boat-house from which Mr. Rushlow and Fred Maynard had taken the leaky skiff.

Evidently the two young scoundrels were thoroughly acquainted with the premises, for without the smallest hesitation they directed their course toward the open doors of the boat-house, and making fast to a post, sprang inside.

"Have you got the lantern, Gil?"

"Yes; here it is."

"Show us a glim, then. I can't see the secret doer."

Producing a dark-lantern from beneath his coat, Gil Vose advanced toward the rear wall of the boat-house which rested against the shelving bank above.

Carter Green followed him.

Running his hands up and down the boat-house wall, he appeared at length to press some hidden spring.

Suddenly two of the boards moved toward them, disclosing

a narrow passage choked with earth, leading to the bank behind.

"There it is," he grumbled. "It makes me sick, Gil, to think of all the labor we put in digging out the dirt beyond the iron door only to find ourselves in this confounded boat-house at last."

"It needn't, then. Only for this passage Mr. Rushlow would have had you the other night for sure."

"That's true. But come, let's hurry. I have an idea that the iron door and this passage which we found bricked up on all sides and filled with earth was only constructed for a blind. I'll bet you what you like that the real secret lies inside the mound itself."

Wasting no further words, they entered the passage.

As Carter Green had said, it was bricked up on all sides, an arch protecting it from the earth above.

And yet, when Carter Green and his companion had first seen this passage, it was filled with earth, which had evidently been carried in from the outside.

Upon entering the mound—the result of an accident, as stated by Vose—they had of course discovered the iron door.

It was locked and resisted all efforts to open it; but Vose, who was something of a mechanic, had gone to work systematically to explore such mysteries as might lay beyond.

He had taken an impression of the key-hole in soft wax, and getting a key made to fit it, on the night succeeding their first discovery they had experienced no difficulty in opening the door.

It ushered them into a small chamber, square in form and paved with flat stones.

Then came the discovery of the choked up passage.

With much labor they had forced their way through it, only to discover the secret panel communicating with the boat-house at the other end.

Now, upon gaining the chamber at the end of the passage, Carter Green produced a key and flung open the iron door.

"Come, Gil," he whispered, "we've no time to lose, and—Confound it, what's that I've stumbled over? Gil, Gil, look here! The secret is out at last!"

Unwittingly he had trodden on a thick spike of iron imbedded in one of the great stones of the pavement beneath their feet.

Instantly the stone sank downward.

With a cry of joy Carter Green thrust his lantern into the cavity thus disclosed.

A flight of stone steps were seen, leading apparently down into the bowels of the earth.

The excitement of the pair had now reached the highest pitch.

"We've found it! We've found it!" exclaimed Green, breathlessly. "Go on with your glim there, Gil. The secret is ours at last."

Gil Vose obeyed.

Descending the steps—there were more than thirty—they found themselves in a narrow passage immediately beneath the one which they had so laboriously hollowed out.

The passage was a long one.

It led far out under the bed of the bay.

Its end was reached at last, however, and a second door of iron stood across their path.

"Try the key, Gil," whispered Carter Green, breathlessly, as he seized the lantern from the hands of his companion. "I'll bet you what you like the locks of both doors are the same."

He was right.

The key fitted—the iron door flew back.

To their utter astonishment they found themselves in what appeared to be the hold of a ship.

It was securely coiled above with hard wood planks, the

sides being protected in the same manner, and the outlines of the vessel's keelson were plainly to be discerned.

From the lips of the two young men now burst an exclamation of intense astonishment.

There, before them, scattered about in every direction, were small iron-bound boxes, some with lids, others without.

At least twenty of them were opened and filled to the brim with golden coins.

"At last!" exclaimed Carter Green. "Our fortune is made, Gil Vose! What did I tell you? No Sing Sing now, with all this wealth at our disposal——"

"Stop where you are!" cried a stern voice behind them. "Speak another word—move but one inch and you are both dead men!"

"Rushlow, the detective!" gasped Vose, looking behind him, heedless of the warning.

"Yes, Rushlow, the detective!" cried a man who, with cocked revolver now leaped forward. "The game is up, my bullies! I propose to take a hand in this little affair!"

CHAPTER XX.

CHASING CARTER GREEN—MR. RUSHLOW'S DESPERATE STRAIT.

"Rushlow, the detective!"

"Rushlow, the detective!"

From the lips of Gil Vose and Carter Green the cry simultaneously went up.

They were cornered.

Tripped up at the very moment of success.

The desperate situation into which they had fallen seemed to burst upon the mind of Vose on the instant.

Leaping upon the detective with the agility of a cat, he seized his throat with one hand, his wrist with the other, and tried to wrench the revolver away.

"Attend to you friend there!" he yelled to Carter Green. "Give him a taste of your pistol! Confound you, Rushlow, I'll choke the life out of you! Give it to him, Cart—give it to him, old man! This little scrimmage is not up yet!"

But Carter Green proved himself to be made up on a different model.

Drawing his revolver he discharged one shot wildly—not at Fred, but with the intention of hitting the detective.

Then throwing the pistol to the floor of the hold of the sunken ship, he sprang past Fred into the secret passage before our hero could raise his hand to prevent.

The ball, instead of taking Mr. Rushlow in the arm took Gil Vose in the leg, not seriously wounding, but causing him to release his hold upon the detective's throat with a yell of pain.

"After him, Fred!" shouted Mr. Rushlow, who had not lost the drift of the situation. "Never mind me—I'm good for this snoozer—you catch Carter Green if you can."

Catch him!

Fred Maynard intended to catch him.

Not on account of his interference in the matter of treasure of the sunken ship, nor the dozen other causes of complaint which he had against the fellow, but because he alone could solve the mystery hanging over Bessie's fate.

He called to him as he fled along the passage, promising not to harm him if he would only stop, but still the cowardly scamp who had deserted his friend and companion at the moment of peril ran on at the top of his speed, anxious only to save his own precious self.

The entrance of Mr. Rushlow and Fred into the secret passage leading off to the wreck of the sunken treasure ship Black

Warrior had been effected, as will be readily understood, without any difficulty at all.

The iron doors were wide open, the stone trap remained out of its place.

Never was the path of treasure seekers clearer—all they had to do was to walk right in.

Such was the result of the multifarious precautions taken by old Cadwallader Maynard.

Without the aid of the clew which had rested for so many years within the old book cover, Carter Green had solved the mystery in spite of all.

But of course he could never have done this had it not been for the secret of page 99.

The chase along the underground passage was a short one.

For a moment Fred had hesitated, in doubt whether to follow Carter Green or stand by Mr. Rushlow.

This had given the former something of a start.

When Fred reached the chamber from which the three passages diverged Carter Green had disappeared.

Which passage he had chosen was now the question.

Had he gone through the opening leading to the boat house, or, passing through the first iron door, taken the passage into the cellar or the one to the garden by way of the mound?

Rejecting the cellar theory, Fred chose the mound as the way with which he was best acquainted, and a moment later stood in the open air.

He was not surprised when the sound of oars broke upon his ear.

Though never having explored it, he had shrewdly surmised that the second underground passage came out in the vicinity of the boathouse, and he was consequently prepared for just what he now saw—Carter Green putting out in a boat upon the bay precisely as he had done on the previous night.

His first inclination was to call upon him to stop—to threaten to use the revolver which he carried in case he refused to obey. Then suddenly there seemed to come into his mind a strong impression that such was not the wisest course.

He knew Carter Green thoroughly—knew him for the shallow, cowardly fellow that he really was.

Having deserted his companion in the moment of peril, he would never dare to go back to him. What he would do would be to hurry to the place where his sister had been hidden and try to extort money from her to enable him to make good his escape.

If the black soul of Carter Green had been a printed page, Fred could not have read it more plainly.

Acting upon his impression, he stole around the mound, gaining the shore on the other side of the boathouse, and keeping out of sight as best he could.

There he beheld Carter Green, seated alone in his boat, pulling toward the point for all he was worth.

What was he to do?

To attempt to make use of the leaky skiff would be simply suicidal.

Let him try as he might, Fred's past experience with that ancient craft told him that to attempt to row the skiff and keep her bailed out at the same time would be an impossible thing.

With wildly beating heart he leaped the fence which divided his own property from the field next adjoining, and ran along the shore with the speed of the wind, always keeping the boat in sight.

Meanwhile a stirring scene was being enacted in the hold of the sunken treasure ship.

In Gilbert Vose, wounded though he was, Mr. Rushlow soon discovered that he had his match.

The attempt of the young scoundrel to secure Mr. Rushlow's revolver had been successful.

Wresting the weapon from the hand of the detective, he

instantly discharged it, the shot whistling past Mr. Rushlow's head.

It was the last one fired.

Instantly his antagonist was upon him, the revolver during the struggle falling to the floor of the hold.

A fierce conflict followed.

Now on top, now beneath, Vose fought like a tiger in the dim light of the vessel's hold.

The struggle, though sharp, was brief.

With a sudden twist Vose managed to free himself.

Leaping to his feet he sprang through the opening, slamming the iron door behind him as he ran.

A deafening report followed. It caused the boxes of gold to rise from the floor, threw Mr. Rushlow headlong, shaking the sunken ship from stem to stern.

At the same moment the iron door fell inward, followed by a mass of stones and earth.

Then, to the intense horror of the detective, a stream of water as big as a man's leg came rushing in.

Leaping to his feet, Mr. Rushlow stared at the water dumbly.

The full horror of his situation burst upon him at a glance.

The slamming of the iron door had done the mischief.

Evidently here was another of the many precautions which had been taken by Fred Maynard's grandfather to protect the treasure.

Some explosives had been ignited, and the bottom of the bay above the secret passage had fallen in as the result.

"This settles it," breathed the detective, hoarsely. "Here, with the wealth of a Croesus about me, I am doomed to die. Well, there is one comfort—that young scoundrel has met a fate equally terrible. Now to prove myself a man and meet mine as bravely as I can."

He sprang toward the wreck of the door and made a hasty examination, the water rising to his ankles before he had satisfied himself that escape through the passage was out of the question.

It was no use to think of it. The passage was closed forever.

If escape was still possible it must be attempted from the deck of the ship above his head.

With wonderful coolness Mr. Rushlow now produced his dark lantern and flashed its rays about the hold of the sunken ship.

There lay the boxes of gold scattered about in every direction.

Without heeding these, Mr. Rushlow seized upon something of infinitely more value to him in his present situation than all the gold the earth has ever produced.

It was an old rusty ax which stood in one corner behind the boxes.

"My only chance," he breathed, as he sprang toward a ladder leading to a closed hatch above. "My only chance! I must cut my way through."

To cut his way through the hatch took time.

Before this was accomplished the water beneath him was three feet deep and rising every instant.

Springing through the opening thus gained, the detective found himself amidships in the sunken vessel, in a situation even worse than the one he had left.

The place was damp and foul smelling.

Water covered the floor to the depth of several inches, the sides of the ship were slimy and green.

Flashing the lantern about him, Mr. Rushlow soon comprehended the gravity of the situation.

There was a second hatch above him now, evidently connecting with the deck, but to remove this he dared make no attempt.

Of course the rush of water would instantly overwhelm him.

But one chance remained, and that was an exceedingly slim one.

It was to cut through the side of the vessel and make one desperate dive for life.

Removing all superfluous clothing, Mr. Rushlow set his teeth firmly, and advancing toward one side of the dark inclosure struck it a smart blow.

Clearly the planking was very rotten.

The ax had nearly passed through it.

"I must be cautious as I value my life," he breathed, marking out a space some four feet square. "The chances are all against me, but I can only try."

As the moments passed, the brave detective never for an instant yielding to the overpowering sense of horror of the situation, continued his work.

There was no difficulty in cutting through the timber. The one thing to avoid was in working too fast.

At last the moment came.

The space was cut almost through—one hard blow ought to prove sufficient to knock the piece outward.

Then, for the first time, his courage seemed to fail him.

Could he do it?

For a full half hour he remained hesitating.

Then, as a backward glance revealed the water from beneath almost on a level with the open hatch, he sprang forward with a sudden determination, and, with the butt of the ax, struck the rotten timbers with all his force.

They fell outward.

Without the slightest hesitation Mr. Rushlow dove desperately through the breach into the water, which now rushed into the hold with terrific force.

CHAPTER XXI.

RESCUE ALL AROUND—THE END.

"Sign this paper, Bess! Sign it, I say! If you refuse, though you were ten times my sister, I'll choke you to death!"

It was in the cabin of the old canal boat that this strange scene took place.

Carter Green, standing above the kneeling form of his sister, grasping her beautiful hair, pressed a hand around her beautiful throat.

It is hard to imagine a nature so dastardly and depraved.

Yet strict adhesion to the truth compels us to depict the scene exactly as it occurred.

After two days of imprisonment in the cabin of the old canaller, during which Bessie had pleaded with her brother in vain, she was now brought face to face with his cowardly nature exactly as it was—as it had always been, had she but known it—it remained with her to yield or die.

"I will sign, Carter. God knows it was for your good, and not for the love of it, that I kept the money back. I will sign—give me the pen."

"It is here. Get up, and stop preaching. Put your name to that order for the money in the savings bank. You will never be troubled with me again."

"Never! Carter Green! You have spoken the truth!" cried a stern, manly voice behind him. "Drop that pistol! I'll give you two minutes to drown yourself. If you delay, I'll not answer for your life."

It was Fred Maynard, wet and dripping.

Not for an instant had the brave fellow lost sight of Carter Green and the boat.

Rightly interpreting the motive of his visit to the old

canaller, he had swum out from the shore, and now, as the cowardly author of all his misfortunes fled from his presence, Fred flung his arm about Bessie and clasped her to his heart.

* * * * *

"Where are you taking me, Fred?"

"To my own house, dearest—to our house as soon as you wish to have it so. It is there yonder—don't you see it rising among the pines? Bessie, I have found my grandfather's hidden wealth. Our troubles are ended, dearest. We shall be happy the rest of our lives."

Bessie Green shuddered, and tremblingly grasped the gunwale of the boat lately occupied by her brother, which now turned the point, propelled by her lover's stout arms, and entered Fisher's Bay.

"Oh! Fred! How could you do it?" she murmured. "Poor Carter! Deeply as he has wronged us both, he is still my brother. You forced him to jump overboard—do you think he is drowned?"

"Bessie, I neither know nor care. While it was only me that Carter had wronged, I could still forgive him as your brother; but when he comes to raise his hand against you, dearest—well, I would have shot him dead if it had not been for your dear sake."

"Fred, it is terrible."

"He has brought it upon himself, Bessie. If I could swim out to the canal boat which he made your prison, surely he could manage to swim back—Heavens! Here he is now!"

They were within fifty feet of the shore by this time, and even as Fred spoke a head arose suddenly above the surface of the water, gazing wildly about.

It was not the head of Carter Green, but that of Mr. Rushlow.

Instantly Fred directed the boat toward the detective, with a loud cry of wondering surprise.

"Thank God!" was the feeble exclamation, as Mr. Rushlow, assisted by our hero, climbed into the boat. "It was a lucky chance that sent you here, Fred Maynard—my strength was almost gone. The treasure of the Black Warrior is lost forever, but my life is saved!"

* * * * *

That ends the story of the old book cover.

From the moment when he drew Mr. Rushlow into the boat all was plain sailing to Fred Maynard and his friends.

Did they recover the treasure of the sunken ship?

Of course this is the question immediately asked.

We will answer it now.

They got every dollar of it, but the recovery was destined to be a work of time.

It was Mr. McCrillis who helped them and who furnished the money to carry on the work.

It was done secretly and by night, and in the course of the following year, by the aid of expert divers, the treasure from the hold of the Black Warrior was brought to the surface, and deducting the necessary expenses, delivered into Fred Maynard's hands.

By working on the other end of the underground passage the body of Gil Vose was also recovered.

It lay buried beneath a mass of earth—now mud—which had fallen with the explosion following the slamming of the iron door.

Another thing was brought to light from the vessel's hold.

This was a closely-written leaf from an old account book. It had evidently been placed in the hold of the Black Warrior for Fred's especial benefit. The handwriting was his grandfather's and the manuscript seemed to have been an account of his discovery of the treasure of the sunken ship.

There was little to be learned from this single leaf, however, and the remainder of the book was never found.

Across the top of the page was written in large letters:

"Don't slam the iron door!"

Warning too late!

The door had been slammed and the secret of the discovery of the wreck of the Black Warrior by Cadwallader Maynard, and the marvelous pains he took to conceal it from his disolute son, was never disclosed.

It made no difference to our hero, nor to Bessie Green, now his wife.

They are rich—very rich.

The exact amount of their wealth being unknown to us, we could not disclose it if we would.

Of course Mr. Rushlow was handsomely rewarded, and Mr. McCrillis received back his advance with a good round bonus beside.

Though he owes much to the old lawyer, Fred Maynard has never quite forgiven him.

He cannot forget that in the day of his trouble the friendship professed by Mr. McCrillis turned cold.

No doubt the lawyer has lived to regret this.

More especially as before the year was out there came a letter from Canada signed by Carter Green containing a full exoneration of Fred in the matter of the robbery at Endicott's bank, and asking his brother-in-law for a small loan.

Of course Fred sent the money.

For Bessie's sake as well as for her mother's he could not refuse.

He took opportunity, though, to let a certain reporter get hold of the letter, and a few days later it was published in every newspaper in New York.

It brought Fred's old acquaintances around him at once.

To most of them he gave the cold shoulder, having had opportunity to weigh their friendship for what it was worth.

About two years after the accession of Fred Maynard to his fortune there was a famous sale of old books held in New York City.

It was the collection of one John Gillespie—an eccentric Irishman, now deceased.

Among the volumes disposed of was an original copy of Moore's Irish Melodies, and that rarest of rarities, Anthony Barber's Historical Description of the City of New York.

Both books were bought by Moran, the dealer, of Nassau street, and went to England, if we are correctly informed.

To-day there exists but one copy of the latter work in America.

This is Fred Maynard's, and has page 99 restored to its place.

It is rare—it is valuable.

The copy in the Gillespie sale brought five hundred dollars. Thousands would not buy the other.

It was the foundation of our hero's fortune.

Yet it was in the old book cover, not the book itself, that the clew to that fortune lay.

THE END.

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